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THE HUKBALAHAP INSURRECTION

A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines - 1946-1955

by Major Lawrence M. Greenberg

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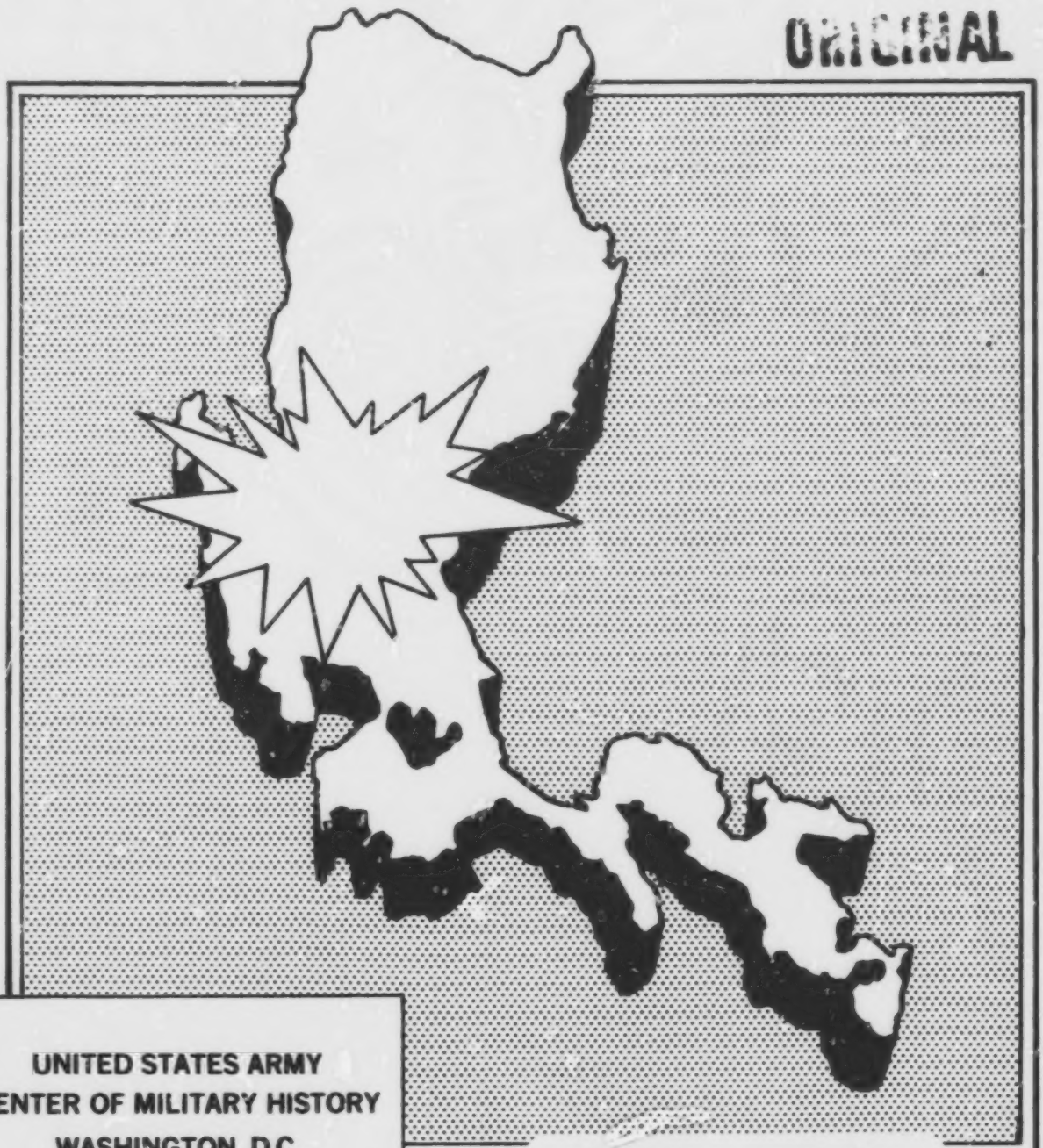

UNITED STATES ARMY
CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Historical Analysis Series

THE HUKBALAHAP INSURRECTION

A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955

by

Major Lawrence M. Greenberg

Analysis Branch
U.S. Army Center of Military History
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FOREWORD

This seventh publication in the Historical Analysis Series addresses the American role in the Philippine Hukbalahap Insurrection. Brought to the verge of collapse by a wide-spread Communist-inspired insurgency, the government of the Philippines, supported by limited U.S. aid, advice, and assistance, virtually eliminated Huk resistance by 1955. This study examines this remarkable achievement and demonstrates how efforts of uniquely qualified individuals, combined with American foreign policy initiatives and international events, prevented the collapse of an important allied nation.

Published originally in the Research and Analysis Division's Special Studies Series, The Hukbalahap Insurrection has received wide acclaim and sufficient attention to warrant wider distribution. Reprinted in its entirety, it provides contemporary planners with insights and observations that remain as valid today as when American and Filipino officials combined their efforts to defeat the well-organized Huk insurgency.

WILLIAM A. STOFFT
Brigadier General, U.S.Army
Chief of Military

Washington, D.C.
July 1987

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PREFACE

An important role for the Center of Military History's Analysis Branch is to provide historical perspective on matters of interest to senior Army decision makers. This entails not only those issues of current concern but also those of potential interest, requiring the branch to anticipate as well as to respond.

This study grew out of this role, specifically a time-sensitive request to the Center by the Chief of Staff, Army, for an information paper of actions taken by the U.S. Army during the Hukbalahap insurrection. In responding to the Chief of Staff's request for background information at the time of the leadership crisis in the Philippines, the Analysis Branch recognized the significance of the story, for it provides insight for those dealing with or planning for Army involvement in similar anti-insurgency situations. This case study analyzes successful U.S. Army involvement in a low intensity conflict for current and future planners, foreign policy specialists, MAAG members, and others interested in this most likely form of future conflict.

The author has examined the background of the Huk movement, discussed the Philippine response, and analyzed U.S. involvement. In doing so, he has identified several factors which proved decisive in controlling this insurgency. Critical to the American involvement in the Philippines were perceptive and innovative advisers who operated within the culture and tradition of the country while finding the proper level of support and assistance. In retrospect, such innovation and support appear to have derived more from low overall military priorities for the Philippines, which took a position behind Korea and

Europe, than from conscious individual actions by American advisers. However, the successful result is one worthy of consideration for contemporary and future application.

This study is not intended to be the definitive treatment of a highly complex political, military, and social situation. Indeed the author operated under a very tight time schedule that precluded more extensive primary research. However, the issues that he raises have sufficient relevance to current and future concerns to warrant a wider distribution than intended in his initial study. This study thus becomes the first in a new Research and Analysis Division series -- "Special Studies." Future studies in this series will likewise deal with issues raised in our shorter range and time sensitive projects.

The author, Major Lawrence M. Greenberg, is an Ordnance officer and Latin American Foreign Area Officer. He is a graduate of The Citadel, the Air Command and Staff College, holds a Master of Arts degree in International Relations, and has been a member of the Research and Analysis Division's Analysis Branch since March 1985. Major Greenberg also is the author of the soon-to-be published study in the "Historical Analysis Series," United States Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention.

Washington, D.C.
31 July 1986

ROBERT FRANK
LTC, IN
Chief, Research and
Analysis Division

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With the deepest sense of appreciation I would like to thank some of those individuals who extended their time, personal experiences, insights, and criticisms to me while I was preparing this study. Without their help this study could not have been written within the deadline established, nor would it have contained information and impressions that could only be gathered by first-hand experience.

During the research phase of the study I received exceptional assistance from Ms. Marcie Stone at the Pentagon Library for requests for DTIC materials and from the entire staff at the National Archives, Modern Military Records Division, in obtaining original government documents relating to the insurrection. It was during this period that I first had contact with retired Major General Edward Lansdale at his home in McLean, Virginia. General Lansdale possessed a unique combination of experience and concern for political-military issues and operations that shed new light and perspectives on the Huk rebellion. During a time of convalescence, General Lansdale critically reviewed my draft manuscript. He both provided me with substantive corrections of fact and validated my assumptions and conclusions.

Still others who were kind enough to review the draft manuscript helped me traverse brief lapses of continuity and logic and shared their individual understandings of Philippine conditions and culture. Within the Center of Military History, I was assisted by Chief Historian Dr. David F. Trask, by Dr. Lowell K. Dyson, and by Dr. Graham A. Cosmas. I would also like to express my appreciation to my fellows in the Analysis Branch for thier time and

criticisms. To Dr. Alexander "Sandy" Cochran, Majors David Campbell, Frank Julia, Peter Kozumplik, Bruce Pirnie, and our honorary Major, Dr. Edgar Raines, thank you all.

I would also like to thank Dr. Charles A. Endress (LTC, USAR) who managed to give the manuscript a most complete review amidst his full-time responsibilities as Head, Department of History, Angelo State University.

Lastly, I would like to express special thanks to Congressman Ben Blaz (Guam) and his entire staff for reviewing the manuscript and providing me candid commentary. Congressman Blaz, a retired Marine Corps general officer and Pacific-region historian, was suggested to me as an expert reader. Despite his busy schedule, he reviewed the manuscript and forwarded to me his comments on its timeliness and continued relevance.

To others I have not mentioned by name, thank you as well. Without support from each of you, this study could not have been written. For interpretations of events or errors of fact or omission, I alone retain full responsibility.

Washington, D.C.
31 July 1986

Lawrence M. Greenberg
Major, OrdC
Military Analyst

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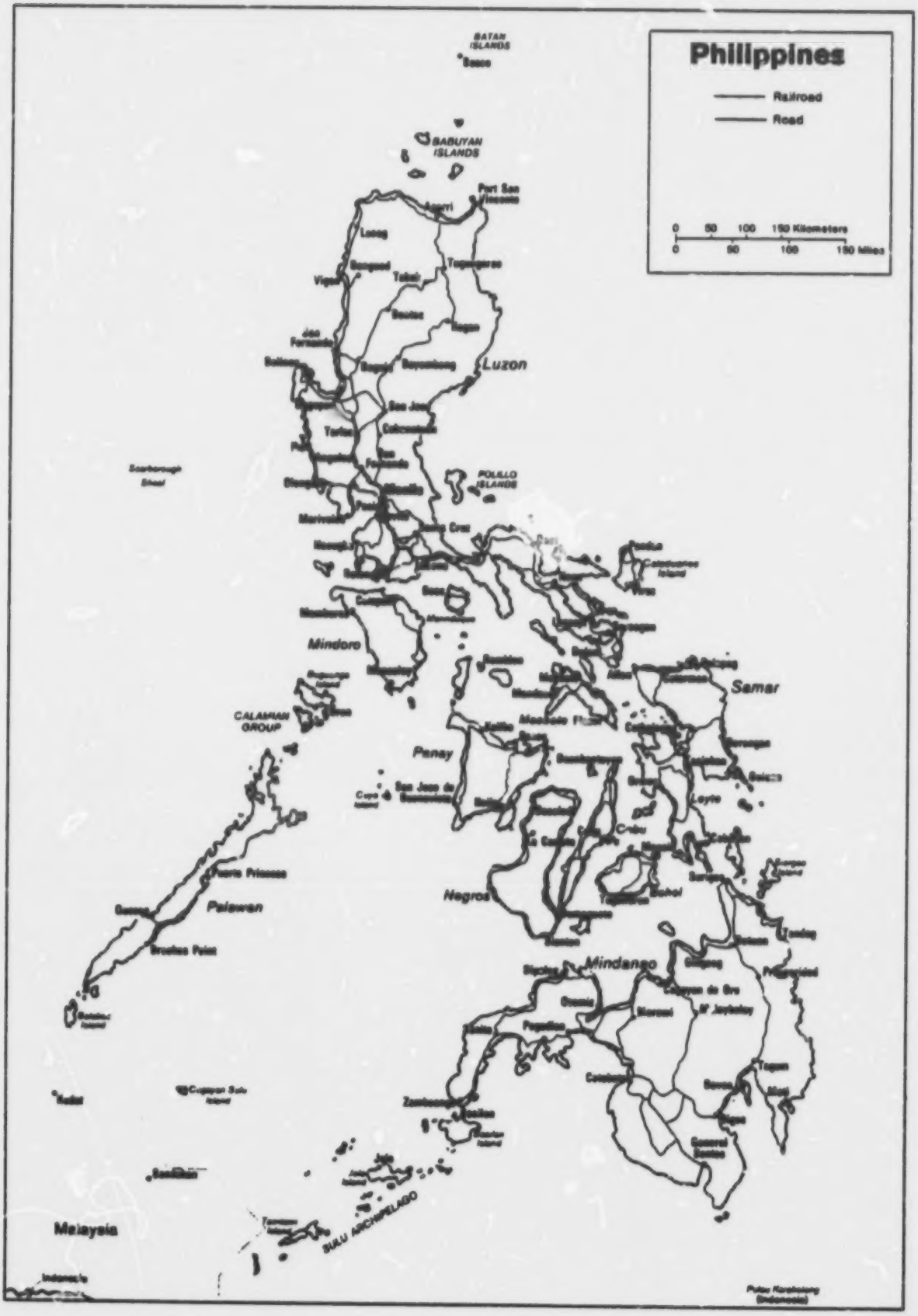
CHRONOLOGY

1565	Spanish explorers arrive on Luzon and claim the islands. Also name the Philippines in honor of King Philip II of Spain.
1583-1896	Period of numerous peasant-based revolts, many based on rising feelings of nationalism.
1898	Spanish-American War and United States annexation of the Philippines.
1899-1902	Philippine Insurrection
Dec 1941	Taruc and supporters establish base of operations in Mount Arayat/Candaba Swamp area
Mar 1942	Hukbalahap organization established by Taruc and CPP leaders
Apr-May 1942	Bataan and Corregidor fall to the Japanese
Jan 1945	U.S. invasion of Luzon Island
May 1947	Taruc returns to mountains and insurrection begins
Nov 1948	Taruc's Huk faction adopts the name Hukbong Magapalaya ng Bayan, the People's Liberation Army, (HMB)
Apr 1949	Huk forces murder former President Quezon's widow
Sep 1950	Ramon Magsaysay appointed Secretary of National Defense and begins to revitalize Philippine military
Oct 1950	Successful government raid on Politburo disrupts Huk operations
Feb 1951	EDCOR project instituted for former Huks -- quickly becomes resounding success
Nov 1951	Magsaysay provides peaceful general elections
Nov 1953	Magsaysay elected President of Philippines
May 1954	Luis Taruc surrenders to Ninoy Aquino -- mass surrenders follow



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INTRODUCTION

In 1950, the Philippine government was pushed to the verge of collapse by a well organized, popularly supported, communist insurgency known as the Hukbalahap. No stranger to internal rebellion, the nation again faced a direct challenge to democratic government. The United States, already at war in Korea, was threatened with the loss of a strategic stronghold in the Pacific, and the subversion of a longtime friend and ally.

This study analyzes the Hukbalahap (Huk) Insurrection to determine what conditions led to the near disaster of 1950 and to discover what steps were taken by the governments of the Philippines and the United States to bring the uprising to stop the revolt by 1955. It examines the insurgent movement; its origins, evolution, goals, tactics, and personality; in order to shed new light on a successful anti-insurgency operation. Philippine governments in power during this time are also examined to determine why their anti-Huk policies failed until the appointment of Ramon Magsaysay as Secretary of National Defense in September 1950. As this unique and extremely talented individual began to change the course of the rebellion, American military and economic assistance became vital to his success.

This study also includes an analysis of the functions and roles played by the Joint United States Military Assistance Group-Philippines (JUSMAG) and of a key U.S. advisor, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Edward G. Lansdale. Without American aid and assistance, the Magsaysay government would not have been able to defeat the Huk -- but aid alone did not stop the insurgency. It required a unique melding of personalities, a revitalization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), dedicated efforts by the Philippine government to win back the people's allegiance,

and the right combination of American military advice and economic aid. Lacking any of these essential ingredients, the anti-Huk campaign might well have failed.

This is the story of a once powerful indigenous communist insurgency, of American aid and advice, and of the Philippine government under Ramon Magsaysay. But most of all, it is a story about the Philippine people -- a people frustrated by a string of uncaring and corrupt governments that showed little concern for the country's peasants. With hope and progress, the people would follow any authority regardless of political affiliation. Ramon Magsaysay understood the people he grew up with, and knew what their aspirations were. With American support and assistance he was able to provide what his countrymen wanted and stop the Huk at the very peak of their influence and power.

To examine only military and political actions that occurred between 1946-1955, however, does not tell the entire story. To appreciate the insurrection fully, one must first consider the background and evolution of the Huk movement and of the people of central Luzon. With this preface, the story is placed in context, and one can understand the insurrection and the reasons for its rise and subsequent fall. Under Ramon Magsaysay's enlightened leadership and guidance, the guerrillas were beaten at their own game by Philippine armed forces reborn with pride, competence, professionalism, and a deep devotion to their fellow countrymen.

CHAPTER I

THE EVOLUTION OF THE HUKBALAHAP MOVEMENT

EARLY BACKGROUND

The Hukbalahap movement, known simply as the Huk (pronounced "hook"), was the culmination of events and internal Philippine conditions that predated World War II by centuries and was rooted in the country's pre-colonial period. Economic, social, and political inequities existed before the arrival of the Spanish, who further coopted it into their own variety of mercantilism, and were perpetuated into the twentieth century by American policy. This social and political history divided the Filipinos into classes where the "haves" reaped the nation's profits while the "have-nots" were left with little but their desperate desire for change.

In 1565, Spanish explorers landed in the Philippines (christening the islands for their monarch, King Philip II) and found a homegrown agricultural society that was easily adapted into their own encomienda system. The Spanish crown issued royal land-grants to colonists, who developed large plantations on the island of Luzon, the nation's agrarian heartland. Filipino landowners were disenfranchised and their tenant farmers were placed under the authority of the new landlords. Former native landlords were either retained by the Spanish to operate the haciendas for them, became sharecroppers themselves, or sought work elsewhere.

Filipinos were quick to react to their loss of land ownership, additional taxes placed upon them by the Spanish, and their worsening economic condition. The first of numerous revolts against the Spanish broke-out in 1583 and was dealt with

in the manner of the times -- bloody retaliation. A relatively small Spanish garrison, that did not exceed 600 troops during this period, employed the assistance of several native ethnic groups and ruthlessly crushed the revolt. Subsequent uprisings during the next three hundred years were handled by the Spanish colonial government in much the same manner.

Hints of social reform did not appear in the Philippines until the mid-19th century. A more liberal regime in Madrid allowed some wealthy Filipinos, who rose in social stature via employment as tax collectors and low level administrators for the colonial government, to seek education and operate small tracts of private farmland. The Spanish also started a few small development projects on some of the larger islands, such as Mindinao and Cebu. However, when the enlightened government in Madrid fell, attempts for even minimal reforms were forgotten and the near feudal, pre-reformed status quo returned.[1]

In 1870, Philippine opposition to Spanish rule erupted into a series of guerrilla wars. Despite harsh repression taken against peasant farmers, the fighting continued and by the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the Katipunan Revolt (usually credited with beginning in 1896) spread from Luzon to the islands of Panay and Cebu as Spanish troops withdrew for the defense of Manila. In the same year, rebel leader Jose Rizal, was captured and killed by the Spanish. During the Huk insurrection, his descendants again played a role.[2]

---

[1]Robert R. Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency: Economic, Political and Military Factors, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, [1963]), pp. 3-9.

[2]F. Landa Jocano, "Ideology and Radical Movements in the Philippines: An Anthropological Overview," Solidarity No. 102 (1985), p. 53.

When the United States annexed the Philippines after the Spanish-American War, Filipinos were given greater responsibility for governing their own land. Local government was assisted by limited American efforts to improve both economic and social conditions. Philippine officials advanced in the civil service and many of these bureaucrats joined a growing number of prosperous businessmen to replace Spanish haciendas with their own large plantations. Collectively, they formed a new Philippine elite and sought to retain the status quo that had provided them the opportunity to succeed -- whether through business, agriculture, or corruption in government.[3] There existed little indeed for honest government servants when the system rewarded corruption, nepotism, and favoritism so handsomely.

U.S. POLICY BEFORE WORLD WAR II

American policy toward the Philippines was first tested during the bloody 1899-1902 Philippine Insurrection. Although the nearly three year long war suppressed overt Philippine nationalism, at least for the time, the bitterness it produced among many Filipinos endured well into mid-century. As normalcy returned to the islands in 1903, the United States attempted to address one of the long-term problems faced by the islands--land-tenure. Many large parcels of Church-owned land that had been expropriated by the Spanish in the sixteenth century and given to the Church to administer were offered for public sale. However sincere the effort, few Filipinos were able to take advantage of this opportunity. Those who attempted to purchase land were often victims of usury and fraud at the hands of local officials more interested in graft than in helping the peasants

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[3]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, pp. 7-8.

acquire land.[4] The land sale program failed to transfer land ownership to the farmers but did allow those few Filipinos with resources to increase the size of their holdings. This had the effect of perpetuating the landlord-tenant relationship that had become synonymous with Philippine agriculture. Rampant corruption in government, coupled with an unchanging socio-economic climate, continued under the new American administration in Manila throughout the 1920s.

During the next few years, American concerns about the Philippines were limited almost entirely to economic matters and establishing a date for Philippine independence. In 1934, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 127, the Tydings-McDuffie Act. The act, ratified in May by the Philippine Congress, promised full Philippine independence on 4 July 1946 and established conditions under which the islands would be governed until that time -- the Philippine Commonwealth. The United States retained control of Philippine foreign relations, defense, and major financial transactions but granted the Philippine president and legislature power to administer internal affairs.[5] The Tydings-McDuffie Act created dissension within the Philippine government, for it promised independence at the price of formalizing economic ties with Washington for the next twelve years. Many critics in Manila, and in the growing communist and socialist parties as well, objected strongly to the near total disregard for Philippine nationalism that these strict controls mandated.

After the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1935, U.S. economic and political policy did little to alleviate the basic Philippine problems of poverty and land-tenure.

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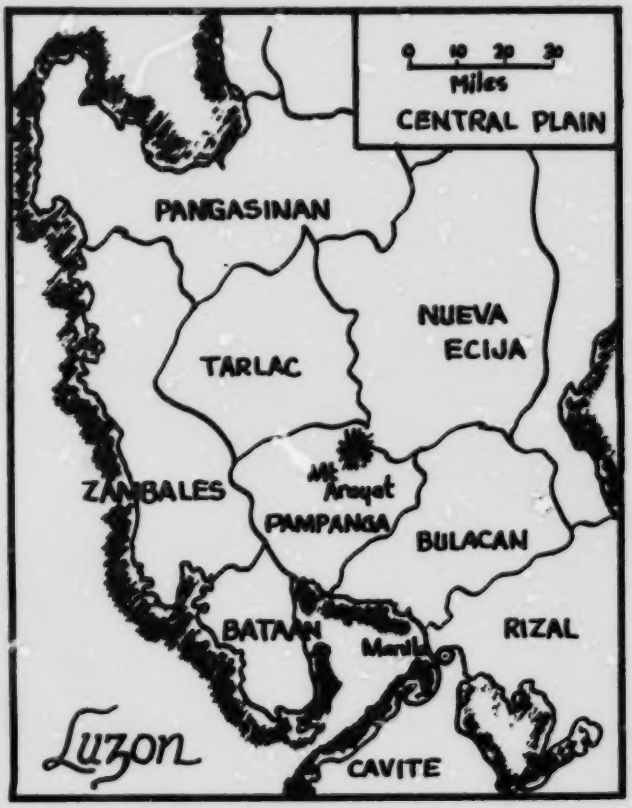
[4]Ibid., p. 13.

[5]Clarence G. Barrens, I Promise: Magsaysay's Unique PSYOP "Defeats" HUKS, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, [1970]), p. 25.

Although the Philippine economy showed marked improvements before World War II, internal distribution of wealth remained much as it always had been. Landlords grew rich at the expense of the peasant farmer who found it increasingly difficult to repay loans for seed or lease money made by the landlord. Confronted with these obstacles, individual initiative was stifled, productivity remained low, and whatever profits a farmer managed to scrape together went toward paying his landlord.

By 1941, 80 percent of Luzon's farmers were hopelessly indebted to their landlords with no expectations of a brighter future at all. Although improvements had been made in education, transportation, health care and communications, the absence of social reforms served only to raise local frustrations with their central government. In Luzon's provinces of Balacan, Nueva Ecija, Cavite, Tarlac, Bataan, and Laguna, few farmers owned their land. The majority were either tenants or hired labor. In Pampanga Province, 70 percent of the farmers were tenants.[6] As a result, annual income during this period hovered at only 120 pesos, about $65. This agrarian region proved ripe for anti-government insurgencies as the local population continued to struggle against landlords and had little faith in the central



[6]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 14.

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government which the peasant saw as unconcerned with their plight.

PRE-WAR DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUK

Peasant farmers, many of whom were literate by this time thanks to American efforts to abolish mass illiteracy under Spanish rule, were demoralized by stagnant social conditions and the failure of the United States to grant Philippine independence after the war with Spain. They realized landlords were taking advantage of them and began to seek outlets for their frustrations. The farmer tilled land owned by an absentee landlord or by the Church, either of which demanded not less than half of his crop, sometimes 70 percent, as rent and payment for seed. Additionally, the landlord controlled almost every aspect of his life. A story recalled by the Huk supreme commander, Luis Taruc, shares the experiences of many Filipino farmers during the early 1920s. Taruc told of his family moving by carabao cart from their home in San Luis, Pampanga, to take over the farm worked by his uncle in Bataan. Although they moved with great expectations about the land's productivity, they realized that it was owned by the Pabalan family, landlords from San Miguel, Bulacan, who would exact their 50-70 percent of the crop as rent and interest payment. But because the land was more productive than that in Pampanga, they hoped to end up with a larger share than before.[7] Faced with a government content to maintain the status quo, it was not surprising to find serious unrest on Luzon, Panay, Negros, and Mindinao by 1920.[8]

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[7]Interview with Luis Taruc, 29 May 1974, by Bruce Nussbaum. Bentley Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

[8]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 3.

In 1920, the Third International, or Comintern, headquartered in Moscow, met in Canton, China. The worldwide growth of interest in communism coincided with the rising level of disaffection in the Philippines. Following the International, an American Comintern representative, Harrison George, joined with several Philippine socialists to form the base for the first Philippine communist party. Together with Isabelo de los Reyes, Dominador Gomez, Crisanto Evangelista, and Antonio Ora, he fought an influential Church and established a small foothold for the communist cause in Luzon. In May 1924 they founded the Kapisanang Pambansa ng mga Magbudukid sa Filippinas (KPMP), or National Peasant's Union in Nueva Ecija Province, a stronghold of peasant unrest and violence. Soon the National Peasant's Union spread across Luzon and into the Philippine capital of Manila.[9]

The Peasant's Union exploited social conditions, the continued colonial status of the islands, the land-tenure system, and the deteriorating climate between landlords and peasants, to become the leader of a confederation of labor unions, the Philippine Labor Congress. In 1927, the organization officially associated itself with the Comintern and organized the nation's first legal communist political party, the Worker's Party.[10] Within the year, Evangelista, as head of the Worker's Party, took advantage of his position and visited Chou En Lai and Stalin. Upon his return to Luzon, he organized four new socialist and communist organizations and began to plan the "class struggle" against the Manila government.[11]

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[9]Ismael Lapus (Colonel, AFP), "The Communist Huk Enemy," in Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines 1946-53, (Ft. Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Forces Center and School, [15 June 1961]). p. 11; and Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 17.

[10]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 18.

[11]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 12.

On the 34th anniversary of the 1896 Katipunan Revolt, 26 August 1930, Evangelista announced the birth of the Partido Komunista ng Filipinas, the Communist Party of the Philippines (PKP). Less than three months later, on the 13th anniversary of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution, he formally established the PKP and proclaimed its objectives. In his address of 7 November, he set forth five guiding principles for the Philippine communist movement: to mobilize for complete national independence; to establish communism for the masses; to defend the masses against capitalist exploitation; to overthrow American imperialism in the Philippines; and to overthrow capitalism. With these guidelines and the PKP banner that displayed the communist hammer and sickle emblem on a red background, surrounded by the words "Communist Party of the Philippines," Evangelista set out on his mission.[12]

Exactly two years after the birth of the PKP, the Philippine Supreme Court declared it illegal and Evangelista and several of his chief lieutenants were imprisoned. They were charged with plotting the overthrow of the government and instigating large-scale, bloody riots in Manila. Other PKP members went underground and began to fight against landlords on behalf of the peasants. Although not widespread, PKP attacks unsettled central Luzon. Landlords were murdered, farm animals slaughtered, and many fields were put to the torch. In reaction, President Quezon instituted several minor land reform measures, including putting a 30 percent limit on the amount of a tenant's crop that could be demanded by the landlord. Although highly lauded at its conception, this reform was all but ignored by landlords, courts, and the government.[13]

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[12]Rodney S. Azama, The Huk and the New People's Army: Comparing Two Postwar Filipino Insurgencies, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, [26 April 1985]), p. 209; and Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 12.

[13]Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 209; and Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 13.

An unfortunate side-effect of the 1932 court decision was a dramatic rise in prestige and size of the heretofore weak Philippine Socialist Party (formed in April 1932 in Pampanga) and the militant Worker and Peasant's Union (WPU). With the PKP in an outlaw status, the socialists and WPU became the legal foci for many PKP supporters. Both organizations gained considerable influence during the next six years as poor socio-economic conditions remained unchanged for Luzon's tenant farmers and urban poor.[14]

Amidst increasing incidents of violent communist-sponsored demonstrations in Manila in 1938, Quezon released PKP leaders Evangelista, Taruc, and de los Reyes when they pledged their loyalty to the government and to American efforts to resist fascist and Japanese expansion.[15] This action soon proved less than desirable for Quezon. Almost immediately after his parole, Evangelista assumed leadership of a united socialist front when the PKP merged with the Socialist Party on 7 November. The new organization openly proclaimed the communist doctrine and spread from its traditional stronghold in central Luzon to Bataan, Zambales, and to the islands of Cebu, Panay, and Negros.

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[14]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 19.

[15]Taruc, interview, p. 40.

COMMUNIST PARTY EVOLUTION BEFORE 1941

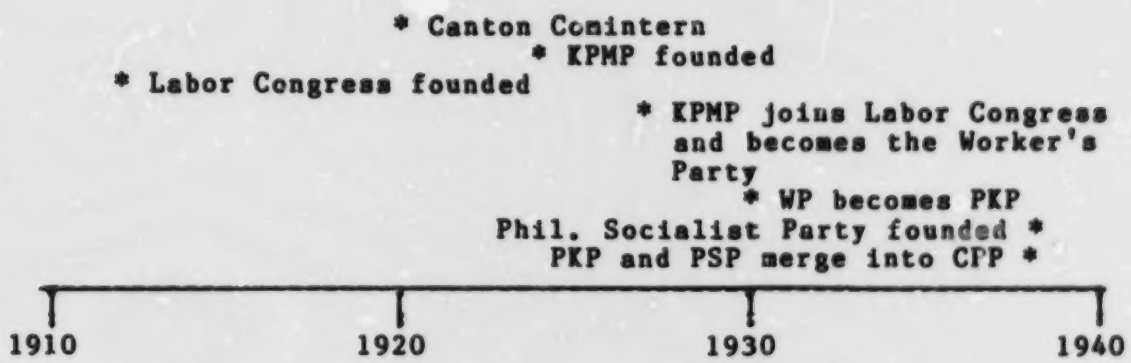

Chart 1

Evangelista's bitter opposition to Quezon and his administration continued until 1941 when the threat of Japanese invasion brought a temporary truce and offers from the PKP to support the Commonwealth. President Quezon, who trusted neither Evangelista nor the CPP coalition, refused the offer.[16] The stage had been set for the war with Japan that was sure to come. Evangelista was the leader of a small but growing socialist/communist organization that drew support from the large number of dissatisfied peasants in Luzon's heartland. The Philippine central government distrusted the CPP coalition and despite the growing clouds of war on the horizon, refused to negotiate any cooperative agreements with them. The peasant remained trapped by his poor social and economic status and perceived the Manila government as content to let this condition continue. Now, on top of all these concerns, the threat of Japanese invasion cast an even darker shadow over the Filipino peasant.

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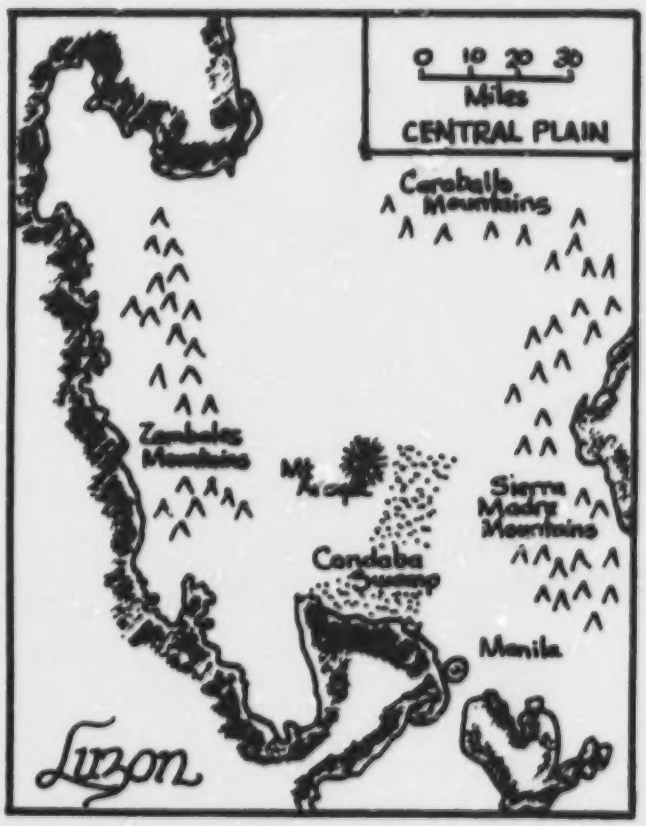
[16]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 13; Eduardo Lachica, The HUKS: Philippine Agrarian Society in Revolt, (NY: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 103; and Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 19.

CHAPTER II

WORLD WAR II AND HUK EXPANSION

The Japanese invasion of the Philippines in December 1941 provided the impetus that enabled a small number of untrained, unorganized, communist rebels to become an effective guerrilla force. Although the CPP sought to expand its support base in Luzon before the war, the Japanese invasion provided the opportunity to do this. With an invader occupying Phillippine soil, the CPP grasped the chance to continue their cause, but now as patriotic freedom fighters facing an evil and numerically superior foe.



Willing to fight the invaders but unable to secure agreement with the Quezon administration, Evangelista took to the mountains of Luzon with a small band of CPP activists. With few trained fighters and even fewer weapons, the communists established a base of operations in the vicinity of Mount Arayat and the neighboring Candaba Swamp. Protected by dense mountain jungles and vast swamps, Evangelista planned a campaign to harass the Japanese. Here he adopted the slogan, "Anti-Japanese Above All," and sought to form a united, nationalist organization that would integrate

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communist and non-communist groups alike. From his Mount Arayat stronghold, Evangelista and his forces launched small but annoying forays from this base against the Japanese as they advanced across Luzon toward Bataan and Corregidor. The KPMP and the socialist Peasant and Workers' Union, who merged into a united front in 1938, were consolidated totally and placed under the overall control of Evangelista and the CPP.[1]

Spurned by both the Quezon government and the retreating American forces, the communist guerrillas nevertheless fought the Japanese. On 10 December 1941, CPP leaders issued a manifesto in which they vowed to support the Commonwealth and U.S. efforts to resist the Japanese and urged the people to support their united anti-Japanese front.[2] Aware of his military weakness, Evangelista directed attacks against the Japanese-controlled Police Constabulary, whose mission was to suppress opposition in the countryside. His attacks, mainly raids and ambuscades, succeeded in a number of important areas. First, they allowed the accumulation of arms and ammunition, items that remained in constant shortage. Second, many individual members of the constabulary were convinced to join the guerrilla movement as an alternative to execution. Third, the raids showed the peasants that an organized resistance movement existed and kept many villages from accepting total Japanese domination. Finally, the raids intimidated the Police Constabulary. Taking casualties from an enemy who disappeared into the countryside, the

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[1]Luis Taruc, Born of the People, (Bombay: People's Publishing House, LTD, 1953), pp. 45-6; Rodney S. Azema, The Huks and the New People's Army: Comparing Two Postwar Filipino Insurgencies, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, [26 April 1985]), p. 210; and Ismael Lapus (Colonel, AFP), "The Communist Huk Enemy," in Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines 1946-53, (Ft. Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Forces Center and School, [15 June 1961]), p. 13.

[2]Robert R. Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency: Economic, Political, and Military Factors, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, [1963]), p. 22.

constabulary developed a great deal of resistance to venturing far afield.[3]

By the end of 1941, Evangelista's raids gained his forces the respect of local peasants and, as often is the case with patriotic "Robin Hoods," their fame spread rapidly. The Japanese could do very little to suppress these popular feelings and often contributed to them through their harsh, often brutal, treatment of Luzon's peasantry. Time and time again, the Kempei Tai (Japanese secret police) committed atrocities against the populace in attempts to get information about Taruc's guerrillas. Often assisted by the Makapili, the Japanese secret police spread terror across Luzon and drove many Filipinos to the CPP guerrillas. Because the CPP were the best organized and most active resistance group on Luzon during the early years of the Japanese occupation, peasants often viewed them as the most effective and visible opposition to the Japanese.[4] In January 1942, Evangelista and his deputy, Abad Santos, were captured by a Japanese patrol and later put to death when they refused to call for the surrender of their guerrilla forces.[5]

On 29 March 1942, in a small forest clearing near the base of Mount Arayat where the provinces of Pampanga, Tarlac, and Nueva Ecija intersect, the CPP merged with Luzon's remaining socialist and peasant organizations to form the Hukbalahap, an acronym for the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon or the "Anti-Japanese Army." Following a week-long organizing conference, the newly formed Huk organization selected four of their leaders (three men and one woman) to become the Huk Military Committee. The Military Committee was at the apex of Huk structure and was

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[3]Ibid., p. 34.

[4]Ibid., p. 22.

[5]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 13.

charged to direct the guerrilla campaign and to lead the revolution that would seize power after the war. Luis Taruc; a CPP leader (although considered more socialist than pure communist) and peasant-organizer from a small barrio near San Luis in Pampanga; was elected to head the committee, and became the first Huk commander, "El Supremo."[6]

Organized into five 100-man squadrons, the Huks embarked on their anti-Japanese campaign. They obtained much needed arms and ammunition from Philippine army stragglers in exchange for civilian clothes, from battlefields on Bataan, from police deserters, and from ambushed enemy patrols. They began to recruit new followers and to seek popular support from the local population as patriots and freedom-fighters.[7] The Huk recruitment campaign progressed more slowly than Taruc expected, due in large measure to U.S. Army Forces Far East (USAFFE) guerrilla units. Most Filipinos who decided openly to oppose the Japanese recovered weapons carefully hidden in the jungles and joined the U.S. supported guerrillas in Luzon. The U.S. units already had recognition among the islands, had trained leaders and sergeants, and an organized command and logistic system. Although restrained by the American sponsored guerrilla units, the Huks nevertheless took to the field with only 500 men and even fewer weapons. Despite several setbacks at the hands of the Japanese and with less than enthusiastic support from USAFFE units, the Huk guerrillas grew in size and efficiency throughout the war, emerging at its conclusion as a well trained, highly

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[6]Interview with Luis Taruc by Bruce Nussbaum, 29 May 1974, (Ann Arbor, MI: Bentley Library, University of Michigan), p. 1; and Taruc, Born of the People, p. 51

[7]Taruc interview, p. 41; and Taruc, Born of the People, p. 13.

organized force numbering some 15,000 armed fighters and capable of threatening the post-war Philippine government.[8]

As 1942 progressed, the Huks made concerted attempts to increase their number of personnel and armaments. Playing on what had become almost a Filipino past-time, "Jap sniping," the search for trained fighters soon went beyond simple recruitment on ideological grounds to include impressment and intimidation. Often, when an experienced Filipino fighter was located, he was given the choice of joining a Huk squadron or facing reprisals against himself or his family. Faced with these alternatives, many decided to join the guerrillas.[9] Others voluntarily joined as news of Japanese atrocities spread across the islands. After the fall of Bataan in April and Corregidor in May 1942, Taruc directed a major effort to collect weapons for his growing force. Battlefields were scoured, private weapons were confiscated, and on more than one occasion, USAFFE arms caches hidden in Luzon's central plain were looted. By the end of the year, the Huks managed to amass 2,000 assorted small arms and a few machine-guns.[10]

In an attempt to obtain American supplies and equipment in May 1942, Huk representatives contacted USAFFE guerrilla units, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Charles A. Thorpe. General MacArthur instructed Thorpe, who before the war was in charge of U.S. Army investigations into communist labor unions near Ft. Stotsenburg, to organize a united guerrilla operation to harass the Japanese. Thorpe carried out this mandate from his

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[8]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 32; and Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 14.

[9]Luis A. Villa-Real, "Huk Hunting," Army Combat Forces Journal V (November 1954), p. 32; Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 32; and Edward G. Lansdale, In the Midst of Wars, (NY: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972), pp. 6-7.

[10]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 32.

base-camp west of Clark Field near Mount Pinatubo in Zambales Province.[11] This initial meeting -- as recalled in later years by Colonel B. L. Anderson, an eye-witness to the event -- was less than cordial and set the tone for subsequent Huk/USAFFE relations during the war.

Anderson and three other American officers met with a Huk delegation, led by Casto Alejandrino, for three weeks in the Candaba Swamp. The Huks requested arms and munitions from USAFFE units but refused to relinquish control of their own operations to Thorpe. They were willing, even anxious, to fight the Japanese with U.S. assistance but only in line with their own ultimate objective of seizing post-war control of the Philippines. After three weeks of negotiations a draft agreement was struck and delivered by two of the U.S. officers to Colonel Thorpe. In the proposed agreement Taruc's forces would follow U.S. military direction but would maintain independent control over their political program. Although a joint headquarters would be set-up to issue battle orders and regulations, the Huks would remain free to run their own organization and recruitment efforts.[12] The other two officers were to remain with the Huks as an example of American trust and goodwill until Thorpe's reply arrived. Knowing that Thorpe would not accept the proposed agreement and fearing for their lives, the two stay-behind officers escaped from the Huk camp and returned to the safety of a nearby USAFFE unit.[13]

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[11]Taruc, Born of the People, p. 56; and Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 30.

[12]Taruc, Born of the People, p. 56; and F. Sionil Jose, "The HUKS in Retrospect," Solidarity No. 102 (1985), p. 70.

[13]A.H.Peterson, G.C. Reinhardt, and E.E. Conger, eds. Symposium on the Role of Airpower in Counterinsurgency and Unconventional Warfare: The Philippine Huk Campaign, (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, [July 1963]), pp. 2-3.

Huk operations continued despite the lack of American support and, combined with USAFFE efforts, prevented the Japanese from establishing firm control over the important island of Luzon. In September 1942, the Japanese launched a major anti-Huk offensive in the area of Mount Arayat. The results from this 1942 offensive were mixed. Although the operation yielded few dead or captured Huks, it totally disrupted their internal organization.[14] The September offensive taught Taruc a lesson he would long remember. If he was to maintain the guerrilla operation, he needed an effective and timely intelligence system. Following the return of the Japanese to Manila, Taruc reorganized his forces into Regional Commands (Recco) and took steps to improve his intelligence gathering ability.[15] What little cooperation existed between the two guerrilla organizations fell apart in late 1942 when Colonel Thorpe was captured by the Japanese. From that time on, the two groups coexisted in an atmosphere of mutual mistrust. Of the Huk units, only one, Recco 2, located in southern Luzon and less political than the others, managed any significant degree of cooperation with the USAFFE organization.[16]

Ironically for the Huks, the brightest point of the campaign came from several instances of Japanese atrocities that accompanied their search and destroy operations. Civilians were tortured, intimidated, and murdered by the Japanese as they sought information on guerrilla whereabouts and members. These terror tactics produced little information but drove many recruits to Taruc. In the two months that followed, Huk strength

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[14]Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 130.

[15]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 34.

[16]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 30.

grew to approximately 5,000 active supporters, organized in thirty-five squadrons and support troops.[17]

The 100-man squadron remained the basis of Huk organization. The squadron was led by a commander, an executive officer, and an intelligence officer, and was organized into platoons and squads. Two squadrons formed a battalion and two battalions made a regiment. Regiments were organized into Military Districts based on geographic areas of responsibility. Five such districts were established: 1st District - southwest Pampanga; 2nd District-central Pampanga; 3rd District - northern Pampanga and part of Tarlac; 4th District - Nueva Ecija; and 5th District - northwest Pampanga and the rest of Tarlac. Atop this structure sat the Military Committee. Shortly after its conception in 1942, the Military Committee combined with CPP leadership to form the Huk General Headquarters (GHQ). Luis Taruc served as chairman of the GHQ, with Casto Alejandrino, a former middle-class landlord and mayor of Arayat, assisting him as vice-chairman. Political officers were placed at all levels of command to advise the commander on matters related to indoctrination and civil affairs.[18]

In January 1943, Huk attacks resumed against Police Constabulary garrisons and Japanese supply depots. As their tactical successes grew and the people saw them as more effective fighters, Huk strength grew again -- doubling to 10,000 by March 1943. As their strength and popularity mounted, the Huks activated additional squadrons and helped form an all-Chinese force, the Overseas Chinese 48th Detachment of the People's Anti-Japanese Forces, or Wachi. This Chinese unit operated almost

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[17]Ibid.; and Taruc, Born of the People, p. 58.

[18]Center for Research in Social Systems, Internal Defense Against Insurgency: Six Cases, (Washington, D.C.: The American University, [December 1966]).

exclusively in the provinces of Bulacan and Laguna and, by war's end, included six 200-man squadrons.[19]

The Japanese mounted another major assault on Mount Arayat in March 1943. Five thousand Japanese regulars, police, and the Makapali (Japanese sponsored Filipino terrorists) surrounded northeast Pampanga, trapping an estimated fifteen Huk squadrons and most of the Huk GHQ. After ten days the Japanese withdrew with nearly one hundred guerrilla prisoners and several members of the GHQ staff. Despite these losses and the temporary disruption of at least fourteen squadrons, most Huks managed to slip between the Japanese lines to safety.[20] Turning a near rout into a moral victory, the Huks drew strength and confidence from the Japanese failure to destroy their stronghold. Following this episode, they intensified efforts to reestablish their military organization and to promote village defense forces throughout the region. These local forces provided the Huks with logistic and intelligence support and, proved invaluable to Huk operations for the duration of the war and well beyond.

Throughout 1943, Huk military organization matured and formalized in both function and structure. Reports generated at the Military Districts were systematized and increased the flow of information and supplies to Taruc's guerrilla army. Military training and education were emphasized throughout the organization. At "Stalin University" (a large, semi-permanent Huk camp in the Sierra Madres mountains) military training was accompanied by political indoctrination under the watchful eyes of veterans from the Chinese Red Army. Just one year after the

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[19]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 34; and Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 14.

[20]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 36.

birth of the Huk movement, Taruc claimed 10,000 active supporters, approximately one-third of them armed.[21]

Huk military activity increased steadily through 1943 and into the following year until the organization faced a dilemma over strategy. Taruc desired to press the military attack while CPP leaders wanted to consolidate their control in central Luzon and expand the popular base. From that time until the U.S. invasion of Luzon in January 1945, anti-Japanese activity diminished although efforts to increase the area under Huk control continued. Huks continued to deny the Japanese unmolested access to the region but failed to expand their own areas to any great measure.[22]

Concurrent with guerrilla operations against the Japanese, Taruc and the Huk began to develop village defense forces throughout the region. These paramilitary units, called Barrio United Defense Corps (BUDC), were loose-knit local units composed of five to fifteen members. Formed ostensibly to protect the villagers, to provide law and order, to promote anti-Japanese sentiments, and to deny the enemy access to food and supplies, the corps provided bases for Huk recruitment, intelligence, and logistics support. Acting through the BUDC, Taruc established governments to run the daily activities of the villages.[23]

In larger villages, defense corps were organized into councils composed of "elected" officials. Besides a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary-treasurer, and chief of police, each

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[21]Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 15; and Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 34.

[22]Historical documentation. Maj. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale, 25 April 1971, by U.S. Air Force Oral History Program, Washington, D.C.

[23]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 24; and Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 15.

BUDC had separate departments to administer recruitment, intelligence, transportation, communications, education, sanitation, and agriculture. Although instructed to avoid direct conflict with the Japanese, the councils organized public efforts to limit Japanese support, sought out local traitors, and administered the law as they saw it. Communication was maintained between the BUDC and Huk General Headquarters via a system of couriers who passed information and supplies to Huk squadrons in the vicinity. A major mission established for the councils was indoctrination of the local people. This mission was accomplished through a combination of education and coercion. That is, those peasants reluctant to embody the Huk cause out of devotion, were prevented from acting against it by the threat of force. Once the BUDC were established and running, Huk cadre left the village, but maintained contact through periodic visits.[24] BUDC leaders "elected" many local officials during this unsettled time, including provincial governors in Pampanga and Laguna. By establishing de facto governments, the Huks hoped to present advancing U.S. forces and the exiled Philippine government with a fait accompli by using this new power to influence subsequent national and regional elections.[25]

In 1944, Taruc refined Huk GHQ organization by adding subordinate departments responsible for specific functions and changed the Military Districts to Regional Commands. The new departments within the GHQ included: Training and Inspection; Maintenance and Supply; Information and Publicity; Communications; and Intelligence.[26] These departments

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[24]William J. Pomeroy, "Philippines: Hukbalahap and its Mass Base," in Guerrilla Warfare and Marxism, William J. Pomeroy, ed. (NY: International Publishers, 1969), p. 233; and Taruc, Born of the People, p. 101.

[25]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 53.

[26]Ibid., p. 27.

dramatically improved the effectiveness of Huk operations. Having learned from the Japanese victories in 1942, the expanded GHQ moved frequently around Mount Arayat and in the Candaba Swamp.

Five Regional Commands (Recco) replaced the older Military Districts and assumed the following areas of responsibility: Recco 3 - Tarlac: Recco 4 - Nueva Ecija; Recco 7 - Pampanga and Bulacan; Recco 8 - central Pampanga and part of Nueva Ecija; and Recco 11 - southern Luzon. Later, Recco 4 and 8 were combined into Recco 9, with control of all of Nueva Ecija, while Recco 11 expanded into Rizal and into the Manila barrios. At the height of Huk influence in the war, these Recco controlled the activities of thirty squadrons.[27]

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[27]Ibid., p. 30; and Reginald J. Swarbrick, The Evolution of Communist Insurgency in the Philippines, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, [7 June 1983]), p. ii.

HUK ORGANIZATION
(ca. 1944)

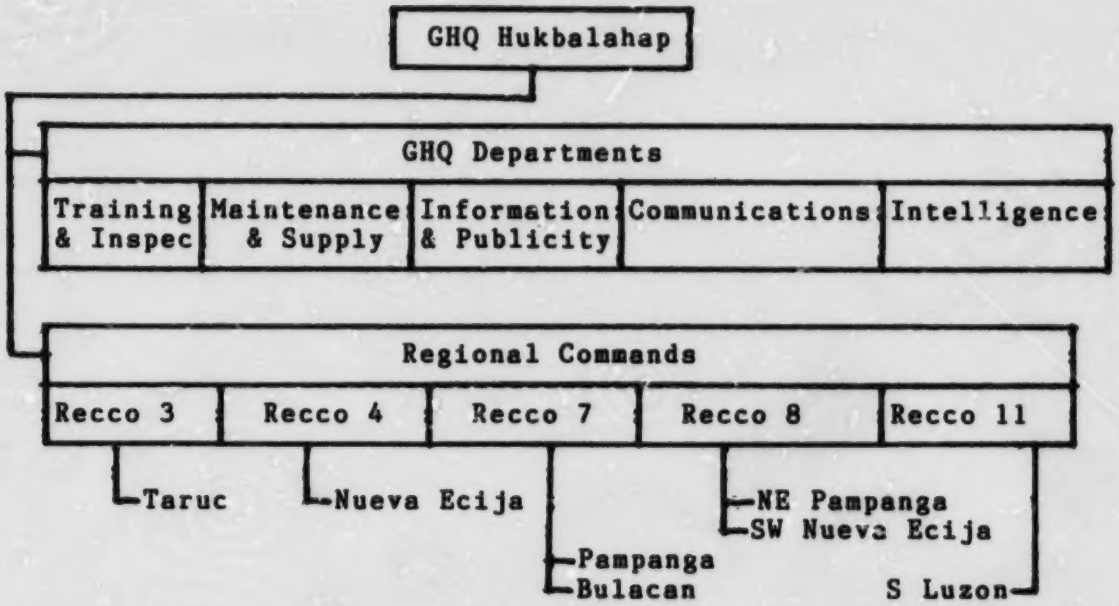

Chart 2

Following the reorganization, Huk activities slowed as internal differences between Taruc and CPP leaders reduced the organization's efficiency. Taruc wanted to continue military operations and, although hindered by the rift, he proceeded with a few attacks on Japanese and police garrisons. Most of his effort, however, was used to press on adjacent USAFFE areas. This developed into a low-level fight for control of central Luzon between the Huks and American sponsored units. Unlike the Huks who sought to intensify attacks during 1943-44, USAFFE units used this period to develop internal organization and to conduct training in preparation for the anticipated American invasion. As U.S. units were becoming active, they saw the decline in Huk activity as detrimental to the liberation effort and charged the

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Huks with passive collaboration. Although not supported by fact or events, these charges increased tension between the two groups.[28]

After the U.S. invasion in October 1944, Huk military and recruitment activity became more active. As the Japanese withdrew before American forces, Huk squadrons moved into villages and barrios declaring liberation. The fact that they engaged in very limited combat with the retreating forces or, that on the few occasions when Japanese troops reoccupied towns the Huks offered only token resistance, made little consequence to the people. That the Huks were there, establishing order amidst chaos, made the difference and gathered a great deal of local support for them.

An incident in the town of Tarlac illustrated how the Huks took advantage of the fluid situation in early 1945. On 21 January, forces from the U.S. 160th Infantry reached the almost deserted town. After clearing Tarlac of a few Japanese stragglers, the U.S. forces moved on toward Manila. Moving close on American footsteps, Huk forces occupied Tarlac and declared it liberated -- but liberated as of 19 January, two days before the American arrival. The local inhabitants did not really care who took credit for their liberation, or for that matter on what date, they only cared that the Japanese were gone. In villages outside of Tarlac the Huks received credit for the liberation and the admiration of even more peasants.[29]

This is not to suggest, however, that every Huk guerrilla failed to support the liberation of the Philippines. In southern Luzon, two Huk squadrons cooperated closely with the U.S. 11th Airborne Division and helped rescue American and allied prisoners

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[28]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, pp. 39 and 46.

[29]Ibid., p. 51.

from Japanese prison-camps at Cabantuan and Los Banos. After these successful actions, members of these squadrons were detached to the U.S. 37th Infantry and served as guides and interpreters while the division drove toward Manila.

Feelings of mistrust and suspicion that developed during the war continued into liberation and laid the foundation for U.S. policy after 1945. Just six days after U.S. forces landed on Leyte in October 1944, MacArthur's headquarters, GHQ Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), issued a report on the Huks and their political ambitions. In this report they were defined as aggressive, brutal communist bandits led by a large number of former Sakdalistas (pro-Japanese terrorists and thugs) whose objective was to establish a communist regime after the United States left the islands.[30]

The report continued to paint the Huks in an unflattering and biased manner. Besides being anti-American, Huks were described as indiscriminate robbers, plunderers, and killers "capable only of deceit, treachery, and arrogance in dealing with USAFFE guerrilla units." Although the report was correct in assessing them as the largest, most powerful, and best organized group in central Luzon (100,000 members and supporters), the report confused the issue by stating that the Huks were willing to accept arms and assistance from the Japanese in order to fight American units.[31] Greatly exaggerated and often misleading in regard to Japanese and Sakdalista connections, it was not surprising that by 9 January 1945 (the U.S. invasion of Luzon), Huk guerrillas were seen as little better than the Japanese by American military leaders. These feelings lasted well into the post-war era and they affected U.S. policy for years to come.

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[30]Ibid., p. 47.

[31]Ibid., p. 48.

Two months before "V-J" Day, in June 1945, Taruc and his armed Huk forces joined CPP political leaders to form the Democratic Alliance. They founded this political organization to legitimate communist aspirations for the post-war era through a legal political party. Looking ahead to Philippine independence in 1946, as promised by the Tydings-McDuffie Act, Taruc realized that his organization could use the political system to gain a foothold in the government -- a position from which he hoped later to seize total power.

CHAPTER III

BETWEEN LIBERATION AND INDEPENDENCE

CONDITIONS AT LIBERATION

When General MacArthur stepped ashore on Leyte on 22 October 1944, he was accompanied by Sergio Osmena, the former Philippine vice-president who succeeded President Manuel Quezon who died in August 1944 while in exile in the United States. With U.S. forces pushing the Japanese from the islands, Osmena was brought back to reestablish a legitimate civilian government, to oversee post-war recovery, and to prepare the Philippines for independence. Three days after his arrival in Leyte, MacArthur returned civil control of liberated areas to the commonwealth president and, on 27 February 1945, he granted Osmena civil control over the entire Philippines. Unfortunately, Osmena was considered by many to be a weak and ineffectual leader, lacking the skill and charisma of his predecessor.[1]

But what of the nation Osmena was given charge of? The islands were devastated. General Eisenhower remarked that, "Of all the wartime capitals, only Warsaw suffered more damage than Manila."[2] Essential services were in chaos. Transportation and communication systems were barely operational in most areas, food production was at a standstill, and the health system was horribly overtaxed. The economy was in shambles -- unemployment was epidemic and the nation's export industry had collapsed during the war. In fact, only graft and corruption seem to have

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[1]Leo S. Comish, Jr., The United States and the Philippine Hukbalahap Insurrection: 1946-54, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [8 March 1971]), pp. 3-6.

[2]Robert A. Smith, Philippine Freedom 1946-1958, (NY: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 115.

increased from pre-war days.[3] To accomplish anything, many hands in government had to be crossed with silver and assistance was provided to those with connections, not to those with the greatest need.

In January 1946, Paul V. McNutt, the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippines, delivered a report to President Truman outlining conditions and their effects on the scheduled independence of the islands that July. "The situation is critical," McNutt reported, "it does not at this moment seem possible for the Filipino people, ravaged and demoralized by the cruelest and most destructive of wars, politically split between loyalists and enemy collaborators, with several well-armed dissident groups still at large, to cope with the coincidence of political independence and the tremendous economic demands of rehabilitation."[4]

During this trying period the United States Congress made sincere efforts to assist Philippine recovery through economic assistance programs. In October 1945, Senator Tydings (co-author of the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act) introduced legislation in the Senate for Philippine rehabilitation. Originally seeking $620 million in emergency economic aid, Tydings' bill was reduced in scope by $100 million.[5]

The act provided for several important actions to assist reconstruction. The first of these provisions established a Philippine War Damage Commission, chartered by Congress to

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[3]William B. Steele, Internal Defense in the Philippines: 1946-1954, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [1967]), p. 2.

[4]Comish, The US and the Philippine Hukbalahap Insurrection, p. 8.

[5]Ibid., p. 26.

investigate and pay claims for property lost as a result of military action. The commission owed its conception as much to an August 1943 promise by President Roosevelt to "assist in the full repair of ravages caused by war," as it did to concerns about conditions on the islands.[6] A second provision authorized the U.S. government to transfer surplus military equipment and property, at cost or as grants, to the Philippine government. Together, Congress hoped that the influx of economic aid and Philippine acquisition of cheap, reliable equipment would speed reconstruction and put the nation's economy back on track.[7]

This well intentioned program, as well as other smaller ones, however, did little to solve the problems faced by the Philippine people or promote an enlightened climate for political or social reforms. American money, supplies, and equipment were quickly absorbed by an economy starved for even the most basic commodities. Amidst a people hungry for all types of goods, black markets flourished, relief and rehabilitation materials disappeared, and the Osmena administration seemed unwilling to do anything about corruption. War damage claims, administered by a joint U.S.-Philippine War Damage Corporation, began business in June but, soon became hopelessly mired in bureaucratic red-tape. Although the U.S. Congress allocated $520 million for Philippine war claims, that figure fell far short of the $1.2 billion estimate made by President Osmena, or even the $800 million estimate submitted by the U.S. War Damage Commission that visited the islands shortly after liberation.[8]

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[6]Milton W. Meyer, A Diplomatic History of the Philippines, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1965), p. 5.

[7]US Department of State, The Philippine Rehabilitation Program: Report to the President by the Secretary of State, Far Eastern Series, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, [31 August 1954]), p. 3.

[8]Robert R. Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency: Economic, Political, and Military Factors, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, [1963]), p. 60.

During the corporation's four year life, more than one million private claims were processed. Each of some 685 daily claims had to be validated before payments were made. Although the first payment to the Philippine government was made in December 1946, payment of the first individual claim was not made until April 1947. When the commission finished its work in 1950, it had dispersed only $388 million against claims totaling $1.25 billion.[9] Slowness, inefficiency, and overt corruption within the Commission set public feelings against the central government and by extension against the United States. Needless to say, Huk propagandists combined these feelings of neglect and corruption with those about land-tenancy as they rebuilt their popular base. As the people's frustrations grew, so did their affinity for the communist cause -- not so much from an ideological position, as from their desire for change and reform.

UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD THE PHILIPPINES

The attitudes of U.S. policy-makers toward the islands in the period between liberation and independence was paternalistic, economically based, conservative, and anti-Huk. Post-war policy was aimed at returning the nation to normalcy through economic assistance that would, in essence, reestablish conditions as they existed before 1941. In short, American policy sought to return the status quo and cut the umbilical cord with Manila, by granting the nation independence, just as soon as it could. This policy resulted in the implementation of poorly administered assistance programs that often worked to the Huks' advantage.

Emergency assistance in the forms of food and aid were rushed to the islands on the heels of liberation. By mid-1945,

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[9]Comish, The US and the Hukbalahap Insurrection, p. 27.

200 million pounds of food were shipped to Manila to relieve shortages caused by the near total breakdown of Philippine agriculture. However promising the effort, emergency programs suffered from a lack of American supervision once the aid reached the Philippines. Once unloaded, the distribution of aid was mismanaged by inept, usually corrupt, Filipino officials. These problems were aggravated by the release of several thousand Filipino collaborators by United States and Philippine authorities when their skills were needed by the Osmena government.[10] However, as often is the case involving large sums of money and materiel flooding into an impoverished nation, many local officials took the opportunity to become wealthy through corruption and the black market at the expense of their countrymen.

Based on U.S. wartime experience with the Huk, intelligence reports produced in the closing days of the war by the Southwest Pacific Area staff, and in consultation with President Osmena (who had a narrow understanding of the Huks and their goals), MacArthur ordered the guerrillas disarmed and dispersed. Of all the Huk squadrons that participated in the war, only two from southern Luzon were offered official recognition and promised veteran benefits, back pay, and the opportunity to integrate into the Philippine armed forces. Conversely, most USAFFE veterans were integrated directly into the Philippine Military Police Command, and promised full benefits.[11] These seemingly arbitrary actions led to serious confrontations between Huk and U.S. forces and, when coupled with U.S. reluctance to even recognize them as bona fide anti-Japanese guerrillas, the stage was set for long-term disaffections.

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[10]Ibid. p. 45.

[11]Rodney S. Azama, The Huks and the New People's Army: Comparing Two Postwar Filipino Insurgencies, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, [26 April 1985]), p. 42; and Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, pp. 53-55.

It became official U.S. policy to ignore the Huks, considering them but bands of armed civilians. Several squadrons offered to join the AFP, but were refused and ordered instead to surrender their arms. In more than one instance, Huks were confronted by armed U.S. and Philippine forces sent to carry out U.S. policy regarding the disarmament of armed civilian groups. In Pampanga Province, American troops surrounded three squadrons who refused to lay down their arms. These Huks were finally disarmed at rifle-point. In mid-February, U.S. troops arrested members of the Huk GHQ and imprisoned them in San Fernando. When Taruc and Alejandrino were arrested, temporary control of the movement fell to Mariano Balges, Huk GHQ political commissar. Balges fled with many of his supporters to the jungles and swamps of central Luzon and began the process of rebuilding the Huk organization. Many local people, who just weeks before had applauded the arrival of U.S. forces, viewed the incarceration of the Huk leadership and other hardhanded American and Filipino actions with disdain and threw-in once again with the guerrillas.[12]

After twenty-two days of imprisonment, Taruc and Alejandrino were released when mass demonstrations threatened to undermine peace throughout central Luzon. United States and Philippine government authorities hoped that the two leaders would convince Huks to come-in and surrender their arms. Instead, Taruc reassumed his position as Hukbalahap "El Supremo," this time vowing to continue the fight against the government and the United States. Unfortunately for Taruc and Alejandrino, Huk intelligence suffered seriously during liberation and they were arrested once again by U.S. CIC agents in April. This time, they were sent to Iwahig Prison on the island of Palawan, far from

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[12]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, pp. 53-58; and Luis Taruc, Born of the People, (Bombay: People's Publishing House, LTD., 1953), p. 173.

their supporters. As harsh as American actions were toward the Huks, MacArthur had in fact resisted even stronger ones. He held sympathetic feelings for what the Huk were fighting for and told his biographer, William Manchester, that if he (MacArthur) were a Filipino, he would have been a Huk.[13]

Another problem faced by the government after liberation concerned local governments established by the Huks during the war. These Barrio United Defense Corps (BUDC) maintained a degree of order within the villages and were seen as legitimate by the local populace. In the provinces of Pampanga, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Rizal, and Laguna, entire government structures from provincial governor to local postal clerks were held by Huk/CPP officials or their supporters. President Osmena considered these local governments invalid and, with the consent of the U.S. High Commissioner, refused them recognition and ordered them replaced with his own appointees.[14]

At this critical point in Philippine reconstruction, U.S. policy makers failed to see the Huks and their popular, peasant-based movement for what it really was -- a communist revolutionary struggle capable of mass support under current conditions. Instead, the Huks were treated as bandits, their mass support was seriously underestimated, and no real efforts were pursued to bring about socio-economic changes or reforms.[15] Few Americans understood the Huk movement or what was needed to defeat it. Those who did, men such as then Air Force Major

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[13]Ibid., p. 55; and William Manchester, American Caesar, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), p. 4.

[14]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 15; and Reginald J. Swarbrick, The Evolution of Communist Insurgency in the Philippines, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, [7 June 1983]), p. 8.

[15]Comish, The US and the Hukbalahap Insurrection, p. 17.

Edward G. Lansdale, were few in number and not politically influential.[16]

American insensitivity to internal Philippine problems continued into 1946 when the U.S. Congress passed two measures that strained Philippine relations and fueled Huk propaganda fires. In February, the Congress addressed the issue of Filipino veteran rights. In a move that shocked people across the Philippines, Congress, initially at least, denied them GI Bill benefits, breaking a promise made to them by General MacArthur as he retreated from Bataan. The American decision also denied back-pay, hospitalization, mustering-out pay, and burial benefits. In the Philippines, this decision met widespread opposition. The U.S. Congress readdressed the veteran issue over the following five years, finally approving money for Philippine veteran hospitals in 1948, burial benefits in 1951, and later paid Filipino veterans $473 million in back-pay and allowances.[17]

A second action that inadvertently aided Huk calls for a Philippines free of U.S. domination was the Philippine Trade Act (or Bell Act) of 1946. Introduced by Missouri Representative C. Jasper Bell in September 1945, the highly controversial act underwent five revisions before being passed in April 1946. Designed to stabilize economic ties with the United States help Philippine recovery, the act formalized pre-war economic trading patterns and ensured U.S. economic hegemony over the country.[18] Provisions of the 1946 act fixed the Philippine peso to the dollar and prevented the Philippine government from changing the

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[16]Reference Book RB 31-3, Internal Defense Operations: A Case History, The Philippines 1946-1954, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, [1967]), p. 37.

[17]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 62; and Comish, The US and the Hukbalahap Insurrection, p. 36.

[18]Comish, The US and the Hukbalahap Insurrection, p. 31; and Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 62.

value of the peso without U.S. consent. As a final insult, the act legislated a twenty-eight year extension for duty-free trade between the nations and mandated equal and free access to Philippine markets by American businessmen and companies.[19] The Trade Act was the subject of hot debate in the Philippine legislature before being ratified on 18 September 1946, primarily due to the efforts of a coalition of local merchants, businessmen, and politicians (those most likely to benefit from a return to the old status quo).[20] Huks seized upon this legislation as just another example of the United States acting through the Philippine government to maintain a neo-colonial relationship for the benefit of Filipino landlords, rich businessmen, and corrupt government officials.

THE RESUMPTION OF HUK/CPP ACTIVITY

By summer of 1945, the people of central Luzon had serious doubts about the intentions of their newly reestablished central government. Local authorities were not recognized by President Osmena and Huk friends and relatives were being arrested -- certainly unusual treatment for those regarded as brave, patriotic freedom-fighters. To make matters worse, peasants were now falling victim to government police and troops who often preyed upon the peasants for food and supplies much as the Japanese had done. As lawlessness increased, the peasants were forced to choose between supporting a central government that was legal but could not exert control, or to support the Huks, who

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[19]Azama, The Huks and the N.P.A., p. 43; and Napoleon Valeriano (Colonel, AFP), "Military Operations," in Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines 1946-53, (Ft. Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Forces Center and School, [15 June 1961]), p. 26.

[20]Comish, The US and the Hukbalahap Insurrection, p. 34.

although illegal, attempted to provide control and worked to enforce order.[21]

Sensing the growing climate of disaffection, the CPP moved its base of operations into the Manila barrios and began to organize new labor unions. In July 1945, the CPP formally joined with two of the more successful unions they helped establish before the war -- the National Peasant's Union and the broad, socialist-based Congress of Labor Organizations. Together, the three groups formed the Democratic Alliance (DA). Under Lava's control, the Alliance set to plot a strategy for the upcoming November 1946 general elections as a major opposition party to the ruling Partido Nacionalista.[22] At the same time, Democratic Alliance leadership planned the timetable for the eventual overthrow of the Philippine government.

The Democratic Alliance timetable defined three periods in which an alliance of political and military activists would work toward specific goals. The first phase, from 1946-1949, would be devoted to organization. During this preparatory stage, the movement would attempt to win the support of the working and peasant classes. Once this support was well entrenched, they would set up a national revolutionary bloc of workers, peasants, and intellectuals to prevent the capitalist classes from extending their control over the nation.

The second stage of the strategy was to take place between 1949 and 1951, and would focus on the "political offensive." DA leaders planned to couple the mass political base, built during the first phase, with the military wing of the organization, the

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[21]Center for Research in Social Systems, Internal Defense Against Insurgency: Six Cases, (Washington, D.C.: The American University, [December 1966]), p. 47.

[22]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 16; and Swarbrick, Evolution of Communist Insurgency, p. 10.

Hukbalahap. The planning document used for this strategy called for Huk strength to peak at 172,800 members by September 1951. Finally, in 1952, the communists planned to see their strategy through to fruition with the takeover of the government in the third and final stage. This takeover would be accomplished in a mass uprising -- an uprising so grand in scale that the existing capitalist government could not stand in its path.[23]

Throughout the summer of 1946, the Democratic Alliance organized large demonstrations in Manila to demand the release of Taruc and Alejandrino. In September, following an especially violent and bloody riot, Osmena ordered the two Huk leaders released from Iwahig. They returned home and organized political campaigns for the November elections.

The communist political organization also took advantage of yet another sensitive issue that appeared after the war--collaboration. Questions over who collaborated with the Japanese and why, sparked violent debates and hatred in the post-war Philippines. For many Filipinos who suffered greatly at the hands of the enemy the slightest hint of collaboration by a public official was cause for deep resentment. This problem intensified in cases involving the Philippine Police Constabulary and members of the new government. The police had been used by the Japanese to control the countryside and, although they seldom cooperated fully with the enemy, they did operate under his control. Many members of the reconstruction government had also cooperated with the Japanese and were under similar suspicions.

Manuel Roxas, a politician and army brigadier general before the war, was a government administrator during the Japanese occupation. At liberation, Roxas, along with 5,000 others, was

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[23]Donald MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations in the Philippines, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [26 March 1956]), p. 6.

taken into custody by U.S. military authorities and imprisoned for collaboration. Due to his administrative skills, and evidence that he collaborated to minimize violence directed against Filipinos, he was among many former government officials released on the orders of President Osmena and General MacArthur in April 1945.[24] Roxas had strong support from MacArthur, and because of his administrative background was appointed to the Osmena administration and soon returned to a position of power in the Nationalist Party from which he challenged President Osema. During the first post-war election in 1945, Roxas was elected president and forty-five members of the occupation government were returned to the legislature.[25] The issue of collaboration played heavily on the minds of most Filipinos and quickly became a key element of the Huk propaganda campaign.

When the guerrillas returned to the jungles and swamps of central Luzon, they began to rebuild their wartime organization. Luis Taruc resumed his role as military commander while Jose Lava ran the movement's political campaign. Seeking shelter and protection in the same areas they used so effectively against the Japanese, Taruc's armed guerrillas ventured out to harass government forces, intimidate civilians who favored the Manila government, and raise supplies and money through taxes levied on villages, and an occasional robbery or kidnapping when voluntary contributions failed.[26] Concurrently, other armed units were formed that terrorized and murdered landlords returning to lay claim to the lands they abandoned during the war. The Huks received active support from the peasantry for these actions,

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[24]Comish, The US and the Hukbalahap Insurrection, p. 10; and F. Sionil Jose, "The Huks in Retrospect," p. 67.

[25]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 59.

[26]Nestorio Justiniano (Major, AFP), "Combat Intelligence," in Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines 1946-53, (Ft. Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Forces Center and School, [15 June 1961]), p. 40.

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since most of the peasants remained with the land and attempted to resist the Japanese when the landlords fled.[27]

Indoctrination and propaganda campaigns were conducted to support the armed struggle at every opportunity. Stalin University was reopened in the Sierra Madres mountains for promising recruits. Huk propagandists were quick to exploit even the most minor case of government abuse or corruption, and there was no difficulty in identifying these. Realizing that most of their support came from the peasant farming class, the movement adopted the slogans "Land for the Landless" and "Prosperity for the Masses".[28] This strategy proved most effective in the days prior to independence in 1946 as the people searched for socio-economic reforms that never came from Manila.

Thus, as the nation approached independence, little constructive change had taken place since 1941. If there was any dramatic change at all, it was a worsening condition for the peasant, brought about by the ravages of war. The Manila government was riddled with corruption and showed no visible concern for the peasant farmer. Landlords and wealthy Filipino businessmen continued to hold firm sway in government and, aided by post-war U.S. policy, had returned the Philippines to the status quo that most favored their own purposes. The peasant felt forgotten, abused, and saw no hope for substantive social or economic change coming from the current government once the islands achieved independence.

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[27]Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 19.

[28]Justiniano, "Combat Intelligence," p. 40.

CHAPTER IV

THE INSURRECTION - PHASE I (1946-1950)

CONDITIONS AT INDEPENDENCE

Amidst great fanfare, the Republic of the Philippines was born on 4 July 1946. After the celebrations ended however, the government had to face the realities of sovereignty, a faltering economy, and widespread poverty, especially in Luzon. In Manila, the city once called "the pearl of the Orient," a million people lived in shambles, little improved since the departure of the Japanese. The barrios were full of unemployed Filipinos who arrived during and after the war to seek shelter and jobs but, unfortunately, found neither. The youth grew restless and resented the government that expressed little concern for their plight.

The new Philippine government, that had run nearly all of the nation's internal affairs during the commonwealth period, now had sole responsibility for solving the people's problems. Established using the American model of government, an expected result of the country's association with the United States since the end of the nineteenth century, the Philippines had a bicameral legislature and an executive branch consisting of a president and vice-president elected for a four year term and limited to two consecutive terms of office. Beneath the office of the President were ten executive departments, much the same in form and function as U.S. cabinet departments. A singular departure from the American system was the right of the president to suspend, remove, or replace local mayors or governors at his discretion. The final government body, the judiciary, consisted of a supreme court and subordinate statutory courts scattered throughout the islands. All of the justices were appointed by

the president and approved by the legislative Commission on Appointments.[1]

The 1946 Elections

In preparation for the nation's first post-independence election, President Osmena released Taruc and Alejandrino from the Iwahig Prison in September. Both leaders had long anticipated the importance of the post-independence elections to establish a permanent position within the government for their movement. This had been the prime reason for the formation of the Democratic Alliance, the political alliance between the CPP and other socialist/communist groups during the liberation period. The two returned immediately to central Luzon and began to plan the Democratic Alliance's campaign for the November election but never fully regained absolute control of the political organization. However, the failure to recapture their political positions was made less dramatic because of a spilt within the ruling Partido Nacionalista.

President Osmena and Manuel Roxas, his chief opponent within the party, were divided on the issue of how to handle Huk resistance in Luzon. Osmena favored negotiation, while Roxas proposed elimination. After heated debate and intense internal maneuvering, Osmena retained control of the Nationalist Party and was nominated as its presidential candidate in 1946. Roxas, bitter after his failure to capture the party, left and formed the Liberal Party that, not surprisingly, nominated him as their candidate. Not yet strong enough to nominate a viable candidate for the presidency and afraid that a three way race would guarantee victory for Roxas, the Democratic Alliance threw its

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[1]Military Assistance Institute, Country Study and Station Report: Philippines, (Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Research, [1964]), p. 21.

support behind Osmena, the more liberal of the two major candidates. For the time, the Alliance was content to run candidates for regional office throughout central Luzon.

Campaigning during the fall of 1946 was intense and often violent. Roxas promised that, if elected, he would eliminate Huk resistance within sixty days of his inauguration, and instituted a campaign of terror and intimidation to ensure victory. Huk members of the Democratic Alliance responded with their own counter-terror campaign directed against Roxas' supporters and increased their efforts on behalf of their own candidates in central Luzon. The peasant electorate was trapped between the two warring factions, becoming more and more alienated from the central government as the violence continued.[2]

In November, Roxas won the victory on the national level, but lost heavily in central Luzon. The Democratic Alliance elected six congressmen to the legislature in Manila from the provinces of Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Pampanga, and Bulacan. Despite Roxas' victory, Huk supporters saw a glimmer of hope because of their regional success in the election. However, these hopes were dashed when Democratic Alliance congressmen-elect, including Luis Taruc, went to Manila to take their seats in Congress.[3]

Roxas intended to live up to his campaign promise of ridding the islands of the Huks after his inauguration in early 1947. His first step was to use his influence within Congress to deny the Alliance congressmen their seats, along with three

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[2]Robert R. Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency: Economic, Political, and Military Factors, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, [1963]), p. 65

[3]Reginald J. Swarbrick, The Evolution of Communist Insurgency in the Philippines, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, [7 June 1983]), p. 10; and Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 65.

Nacionalista senators whom he felt were allied with the DA. Refused his seat, Taruc returned to the mountains near Mount Arayat in May 1947 and reorganized the Huk General Headquarters. President Roxas then declared a virtual nationwide "open season" on the Huks. The Philippine Military Police Command, reorganized with the Police Constabulary after the war, joined Civil Guards (paramilitary units raised by provincial governors) on indiscriminate "Huk Hunts" wherever they thought Huks or their sympathizers were located. As these government-sanctioned groups scoured the countryside in search of Huks, they spread terror throughout local populations. Preying on the people for supplies, food, and information (often obtained through intimidation and torture) they provided opportune and popular targets for Taruc's forces. They proved the best recruiters for the Huks, who gained new members with each passing day.[7] This was the real start of the insurrection.

"Huklandia" and the Peasants

When the Huk guerrillas again took to the mountains, they chose central Luzon for their base of operations -- the traditional land from which they had fought against the Japanese and from which countless generations of guerrillas had sought sanctuary from oppressive regimes, whether Spanish, American, Japanese, or Philippine. Just as the mountains near Mount Arayat and the Candaba Swamp protected them from the Japanese, so now the land protected them from President Roxas' forces. Surrounded by 6,000 square miles of the richest rice growing region in the Philippines, and supported by local villagers who felt the brunt of government frustrations and

[7]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 67.

inequities, Taruc resumed his plans for the overthrow of the Philippine government.[8]

The key to Huk success and persistence stemmed almost entirely from the active support of the local people. Luis Taruc understood them, their desires, aspirations, and, at least during the first phase of the insurrection, used this intimacy to his advantage. When asked why people allied with the his movement, Taruc responded that "People in the barrios ... joined because they had causes - like agrarian reform, government reform, anti-repression, recognition of the Hukbalahap - and, frequently, because they simply had to defend themselves, their very lives against repression."[9] Others joined him to revenge the death or abuse of friends and relatives. Still others were so poor and so deeply in debt that they had nothing to lose by backing the rebels. But the one overriding factor that seemed to be central for Huk supporters and converts was the issue of land-tenure. They wanted to own the land they had worked for

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[8]Swarbrick, The Evolution of Communist Insurgency, p. 19.

[9]Benedict Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977), p. 170.

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generations. Luzon, with the country's highest rate of land-tenancy, provided an ideal recruiting ground for the movement.[10]

ORGANIZATION FOR THE INSURRECTION

At the onset of the insurrection, the Huk movement was made up of three general types of people -- politicals (communists and socialists), former wartime guerrilla fighters, and a small criminal element of common thieves and bandits. Taruc would have preferred to avoid association with the latter group, but reality dictated that he accept help and recruits from whatever source. Several years later, after the government organized an effective anti-Huk campaign in late 1950, this diversity severely hurt the organization's cohesion and effectiveness.

The Huks were also divided along functional lines, that is, the organization was composed of fighters, supporters, and a mass civilian base. At the heart of the movement were the regulars--full-time fighters who conducted raids, ambuscades, kidnappings and extortion. The second group of Huks, the supporters, were divided between what may be called combat and service support activities. The combat support Huks were generally "die hard" followers who joined the regulars from time to time, but usually remained in their villages and carried on life as farmers. Those considered service supporters performed such non-combat duties as collecting taxes and acting as couriers -- a most important function for the organization. Finally, there was the largest

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[10]A later study conducted among four hundred captured Huks (sixty percent of whom were under thirty years of age), found that a full ninety-five percent of the interviewees claimed to have joined the Huk as a means to pursue land reform. Rodney S. Azama, The Huks and the New People's Army: Comparing Two Postwar Filipino Insurgencies, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, [26 April 1985]), p. 79; and John Jameson, The Philippine Constabulary Force, 1948-1954, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [1971]), p. 26.

group of all, the mass support base. Although the people in this category rarely fought with the guerrillas, they provided them with food, information, and sanctuary. The number of supporters in the mass base was always a subject of either debate or boasting, but it was generally accepted to have peaked at the end of 1950 at some one million peasants and farmers. This was the foundation upon which Taruc built his movement and without which it could not have survived.[11]

To control far-flung Huk activities, Taruc developed an extensive and well organized structure. This structure drew heavily on wartime organization and fully integrated the militant Huk forces with the political CPP faction. The National Congress and the thirty-one member Central Committee, so common to communist movements, sat atop the organization. An eleven-member Politburo was subordinate to the Central Committee and provided day-to-day direction for the movement through its secretariat. Consisting of four major departments, the Secretariat was the level at which the movement's political and military branches met and may be considered the Huk operational level of command, with those levels above it working at the strategic level.

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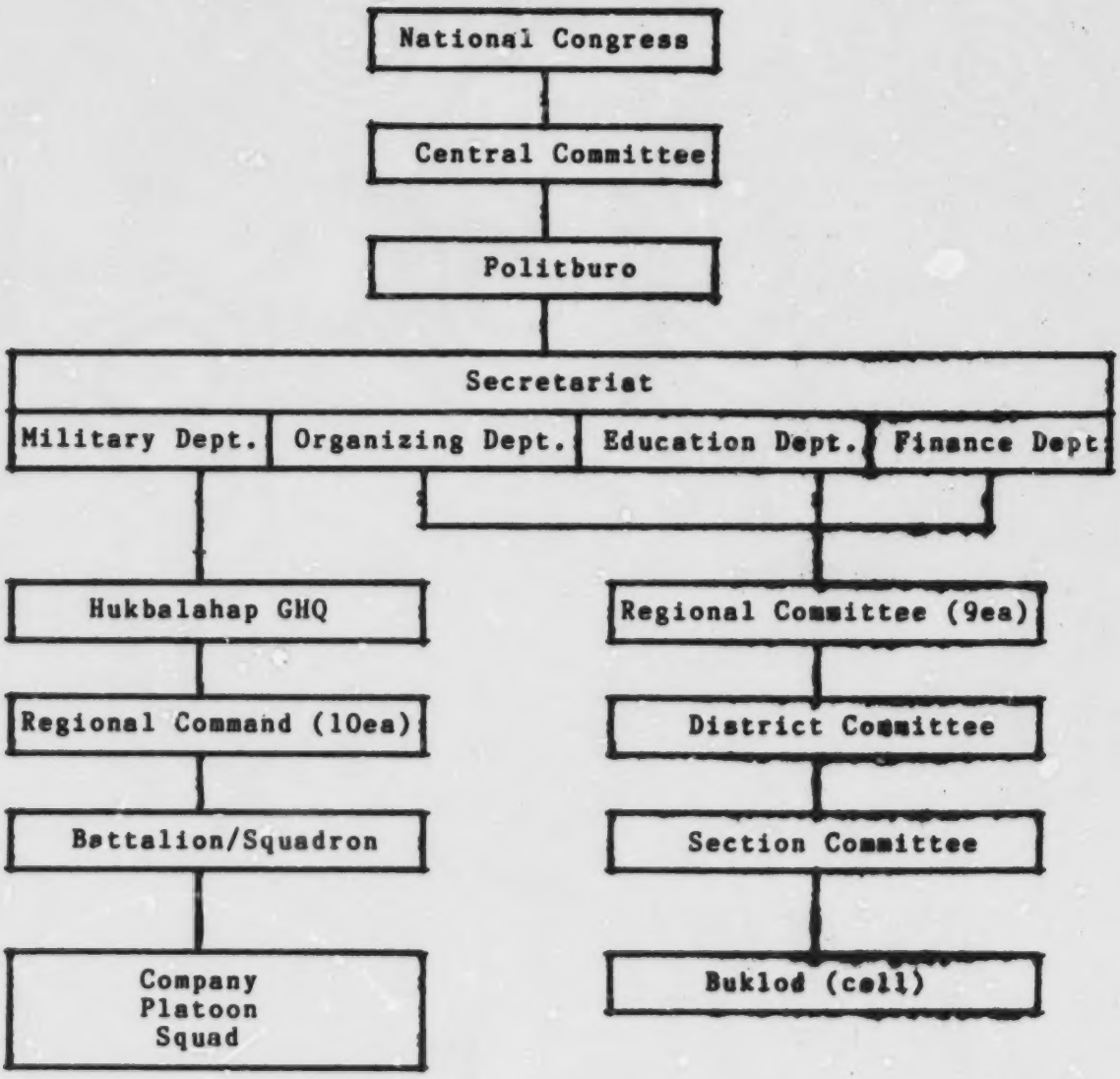
[11]Harvey Averch and John Koehler, The Huk Rebellion in the Philippines: Qualitative Approaches, (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, [August 1970]), p. 2; and Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 84.

CPP/HUK Organization
(ca. 1950)



Source: Donald MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations in the Philippines, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [26 March 1956], p. 35.

Chart 3

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The internal organization of the Huk Military Department was constructed similar to that of the overall body. Each Regional Command (Recco) was composed of a single regiment (almost totally concerned with administration and logistics) made up of two battalions of two squadrons each. The 100 man squadron (company) was nominally composed of two platoons, each platoon having four twelve-man squads.[12]

Despite this impressive organization, the movement suffered from two important deficiencies that worked to its detriment after 1951. These areas were armaments and communications, with armaments being the more pressing and constant problem. As during World War II, obtaining sufficient amounts of arms and ammunition remained a major obstacle. What weapons they had, they stole, found, or purchased in Manila's black market. To counter this shortcoming, Taruc relied heavily on obtaining weapons after battles, raiding government outposts, or simply picking up armed fighters on their way to a large engagement that occasionally saw Huk combat formations as large as 2,000 troops.[13] There exists little evidence to substantiate claims made by President Roxas that the guerrillas received external arms shipments from Chinese communists on the mainland. On the contrary, the matter of arming his available troops remained one of Taruc's chief concerns throughout the insurrection.

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[12]Donald MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations in the Philippines, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [26 March 1956]), p. 5.

[13]Ismael Lapus (Colonel, AFP), " The Communist Huk Enemy," in Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines 1946-53, (Ft. Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Forces Center and School, [15 June 1961]), p. 23; and Clifford M.White, Why Insurgency was Defeated in the Philippines. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [1967]), p. 6.

The other area in which Huk organization was deficient was communications. Although the insurgents acquired several radios during the course of the rebellion, including some purchased in Manila in 1948 but captured by government forces before they could be used, evidence showed that they were used primarily for intelligence gathering.[14] That is, Huks monitored government troops but did not use the radios for their own communications. They chose to do this for several reasons; they lacked trained radiomen, sufficient radios, or spare parts and batteries. Instead, Huks relied on the time-tested courier system to transfer information, orders, and supplies between their elements. This simple system worked well for several years, supplying squadrons with information about government movements and food but, lacked flexibility and responsiveness when later faced with new government tactics.

Huk Intelligence and PSYOP

During the height of the insurgency, much of its success depended on good intelligence. Outnumbered, outgunned, and outsupplied, Taruc relied on information about government activities to plan his operations. Throughout Huklandia, his agents recruited local government officials and members of the Philippine Police Constabulary as informants. Not all of these officials offered their help voluntarily, but threats against them or their families often gained their cooperation.[15] Huks also attempted, sometimes successfully, to infiltrate government forces. Once in, agents sought weapons, information, and provoked ill feelings between officers and men by pointing out how differently were their respective life styles within the armed forces. Police and several Philippine Army officers and

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[14]Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 188.

[15]Ibid., p. 139.

men collaborated by providing information, either to prevent trouble in their area of responsibility or for greed.[16]

During the early years of the insurgency, before 1951, Taruc found that good intelligence information was not hard to gather. Peasants were eager to help the Huks fight the government troops, who often treated the villagers worse than did common bandits. Information was transported up through the Huk or CPP organization via couriers. The couriers, either "illegals" (usually young, innocent looking men and women who traveled cross-country) or "legals" (couriers that used the highway and public transportation networks) passed their messages on at established relay points to the next courier. Knowing only two points of the entire system (their individual start and finish points), the couriers proved highly successful and remarkably secure until well after 1951.[17] The occasional government radio that fell into guerilla hands also provided a wealth of information about AFP and police operations. In fact, it was one of these captured radios that led to the 1949 Huk ambush and killing of Senora Aurora Quezon, wife of the former president--an incident that proved a grave miscalculation.

The Huks were always quick to adapt local concerns into effective propaganda campaigns. The original slogan, "Land for the Landless," was catchy, to the point, and served the Huks well for many years. Following the violent and fraud-ridden 1949 election, Taruc adopted a new slogan for the movement--"Bullets, not Ballots." Again, Huk leaders identified a

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[16]A.H. Peterson, G.C. Reinhardt, and E.E. Conger, eds. Symposium on the Role of Airpower in Counterinsurgency and Unconventional Warfare: The Philippine HUK Campaign, (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, [July 1963]), p. 9.

[17]Luis A. Villa-Real, "Huk Hunting," Army Combat Forces Journal V, (November 1954), p. 36; and Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 140.

situation that the people felt strongly about and capitalized on it.[18]

To supplement their propaganda campaign and to prove to the people that the Huk/CPP organization had authority, Huk headquarters published and widely distributed a series of newspapers and periodicals. These publications ran the gamut from the bi-weekly newspaper Titus (Sparks) to a monthly theoretical magazine for Huk cadre, Ang Kommunista. There was also Mapagpalaya (Liberation), a monthly periodical that dealt with the Huk struggle and its goals, and a cultural magazine, Kalayaan (Freedom), that published short stories, poems, and essays. Huk propagandists also experimented with correspondence courses, producing two self-study pamphlets with monthly updates -- one for Huk regulars, and one for CPP political workers.[19]

Taruc and the Huk leadership used poor social conditions and corruption within government to fuel their propaganda campaign. During 1948, and up until the general election of 1949, the Huks devoted great efforts to publicize examples of governmental excess and corruption. For example, in 1948 a full 75 percent of Luzon's population were peasants and, for these people, the post-war government had done little to mitigate their plight.[20] Tenancy had returned, landlords ignored laws that established debt ratios for the farmers, and the courts invariably decided in favor of influential landlords. The gap between the Philippine upper classes and the peasant majority had widened since the war and independence, not contracted as many had hoped.

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[18]Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 141.

[19]Ibid., p. 143.

[20]Leo S. Comish, The United States and the Philippine Hukbalahap Insurrection: 1946-54, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [8 March 1971]), p. 54.

Graft and corruption ran rampant in government. The Roxas administration seemed to condone it and did nothing to conceal its presence or depth. In a 1948 letter to General Omar Bradley, the Chief of Staff, Major General George F. Moore (Commander, U.S. Army Philippine-Ryukyus Command) reported that Philippine law enforcement and court systems were inadequate, applied arbitrarily, and did not protect the citizen. Rather, he reported they were being used as tools by government officials, wealthy landowners, and businessmen. General Moore cited an investigation into a criminal ring involved in stealing U.S. surplus jeeps and selling them on the black market. Sons of the mayor of Manila, the Police Chief, and the Secretary of Labor were implicated as running the ring and of ordering the murder of an American investigator's infant daughter. Local police in San Luis confessed to taking part in the incident, and testified that the town mayor, Atilio Bondoc, fired the shot that killed the little girl. Local courts found the policemen guilty and gave them light sentences, but the mayor was released without action.[21]

General Moore also connected this criminal ring to the killing of a U.S. officer outside a supply depot in Manila and with discrepancies in the Philippine Foreign Liquidation Commission's books. The Commission, composed jointly of American and Filipino administrators, was established to oversee the disposal of surplus equipment in the country. At the time Moore wrote Bradley, there existed a shortage of some 6,000 jeeps that should have been accounted for in Commission records. When confronted with the evidence, the Commission failed to take any action. This corruption also extended into gasoline, hijackings of U.S. cargo trucks, spare parts, and incidents of U.S.

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[21]Ltr, Maj. Gen. George F. Moore (Cdr. U.S.A. Philippine-Ryukyus Command) to CSA, 10 May 1948, sub: Review of Jurisdictional Problems in the Philippines. MMRD, RG 319, box 25, folder P&O P.I.TS. NARA, Washington, D.C.

equipment being thrown off moving trains to waiting thieves. Finally, when some culprits were brought to justice, the General found that they were either acquitted or given light fines and released.[22] These were examples of corruption and government sponsored crime that Huk propagandists ensured went before the "public's eye."

Huk Financing and Logistics

The widespread Huk structure required an extensive logistics system to support the guerrilla fighters as well as CPP political activities. Since Taruc received little if any outside aid or equipment, he relied on local support and the Manila based National Finance Committee. In and around Huklandia, the Huks levied quotas on villages for food and some money. Villagers unsympathetic to the cause were intimidated into making contributions by apecially organized tax collectors -- toughs and thugs. Collections were augmented by Huk agents who impersonated government tax collectors in areas not under their control and by occasional raids, holdups, or train robberies.[23]

In Manila, the National Finance Committee organized a series of Economic Struggle Units to gather funds and equipment. These units collected voluntary contributions, mainly from the 20,000 Chinese living in and around Manila, and conducted urban robberies, extortion rackets, and levied taxes in Manila's suburbs. Collected funds were divided equally between the

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[22]Ibid.

[23]Andrew Molinar, et al., Undergrounds in Insurgent, Revolutionary, and Resistance Warfare, A special report prepared for the Army by the Special Operations Research Office, (Washington, D.C.: American University, [1963]), p. 321; and Villa-Real, "Huk Hunting," p. 36.

Huk/CPP national headquarters and the local regional command (Recco).[24] To supplement food received by local sympathizers, Huks began to establish "production bases" in 1948. These "bases" were actually small farms run by Huks and protected from the government by their dispersed locations within Huklandia. The bases only became vital once the Philippine Army severed Huk logistic routes during and after 1951.

Weapons and ammunition posed a constant supply problem for the insurgents. There were never enough of either to go around and lacking outside assistance, Huks had to make do with weapons left over from the war, captured from the Army, or stolen from U.S. military depots intended for the invasion of Japan. However, showing the greatest of confidence in the solidarity of the international communist movement, Taruc established a secret base on Luzon's Pacific coast to receive clandestine arms shipments from submarines.[25] As best as can be determined, this base was never used and the Huks were forced to fight the battle with old Enfield and Springfield rifles, carbines (some of which were converted by Huk ordnance shops into fully automatic weapons), .45 caliber "tommy-guns", a few .30 caliber machine-guns, and small mortars, normally no larger than 60 mm.

HUK MILITARY OPERATIONS

Throughout the first phase of the insurrection, 1946-1950, Huk squadrons roamed freely across central Luzon harassing Philippine Army and Police Constabulary (PC) outposts at will and gaining support. The poorly led, underpaid government forces, with a combined total strength of only 37,000 in 1946, faced

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[24]Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 184.

[25]Peterson, et al., Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 14.

10,000-15.000 Huk regulars and over 100,000 supporters in a region of two million inhabitants.[26] Following the first engagement between Huks and government forces (shortly after Manuel Roxas was inaugurated in May 1946), the tendency among government troops was to remain close to the campfires.[27] On those few occasions when these forces ventured afield and encountered Huks, the outcome usually favored the insurgents. Having been ceded the initiative by the government, Huks seized town after town, establishing martial law and spreading their influence as they went.

In the first battle between government regulars and the guerrillas, a Huk squadron ambushed a 10th Military Police Company patrol in the town of Santa Monica in Nueva Ecija Province. Ten members of the patrol were killed and the patrol leader captured and beheaded. The Huks did not lose a single man in the engagement and the victory provided the fledgling Huks with a tremendous boost in morale. The Santa Monica ambush was followed quickly by other hit-and-run raids on Army patrols and outposts. Huk recruitment showed a dramatic increase because of these early military victories. Events that began in Santa Monica culminated when Huk Commander Viernes, alias "Stalin," captured the city of Nueva Ecija, the provincial capital, with 200 Huk regulars, and declared it Huk territory.[28] This overt challenge to the government went unanswered for years.

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[26]Napoleon D. Valeriano and Charles T.R. Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations: the Philippine Experience, (NY: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1966), p. 23; and United States Army, Reference Book RB 31-3, Internal Defense Operations: A Case History, The Philippines 1946-1954, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1967), p. 46.

[27]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 10.

[28]Ibid., p. 17.

While coordinating activities with Taruc's fighters, the CPP began to expand rapidly in the fall of 1946. As political influence spread westward from the central plain into Bataan and Zambales provinces, propagandists were followed closely by organizers and Huk forces. This was the Huk pattern -- to follow political agitators with Huk organizers and then establish the area as their own with HMB squadrons. Within a short time they exerted considerable political and military influence in Pangasinan Province to the north; in Nueva Vizcaya and Isebala; in Laguna, Batangas, and Tayabas provinces in southern Luzon; and on the island of Panay.[29]

Despite an occasional military setback during this phase of the insurrection, Huks worked constantly to build bonds with the people. Many times, squadrons would stay with villagers, working and playing with them, all the while developing stronger ties and indoctrinating them about the Huk/communist cause. Army forays against the insurgents usually caused few guerrilla casualties but often resulted in the frustrated soldiers taking vengeance on the local people. Military Police Command terrorism and constant demands from the soldiers for food and supplies, bolstered Huk claims that they, not the government, were trying to protect the people from abuse and lawlessness.[30]

Huk raids continued through the spring of 1947, steadily increasing in size and number. In April, the insurgents ambushed an Army patrol, killing six men. In May, a hundred-man squadron attacked the garrison at Laur, Nueva Ecija, looted the village bank and kidnapped the local police chief, who they held for ransom. At the same time, raids and ambushes took place in San

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[29]Ibid., p. 71.

[30]Valeriano, "Military Operations," p. 28.

Miguel, in Bulacan, and in other provinces across central Luzon.[31] President Roxas was outraged by the Huks' success and following the Laur raid, ordered the military to attack the guerrilla stronghold around Mount Arayat.

Two thousand Army and constabulary troops participated in OPERATION ARAYAT. The operation spanned two weeks but produced only meager results -- twenty-one Huks were reported killed in action and small quantities of rice and weapons captured. Huk intelligence agents knew the government troops were coming, where they would be coming from, and about how long they would devote to the operation. As a result, almost all the Huks in the area slipped through government lines to safety. When contact was made, it usually happened by accident, thus the relatively low Huk losses considering the total number of insurgents in the affected area.[32]

In February 1947, Luis Taruc outlined his "five minimum terms for peace" to author and journalist Benedict Kerkvliet. Taruc demanded that the government: immediately restore individual rights; grant amnesty for all Huk members; replace police and government officials in central Luzon; restore the seats of the six Democratic Alliance congressmen elected in 1946; and institute land reforms that would abolish land-tenancy.[33] Taruc realized fully that Roxas would never concede to these demands, especially those concerning the DA congressmen and replacing officials but, the Huks were riding a swell of popular support and proclaiming the movement's demands gave it credibility outside central Luzon.

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[31]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 17.

[32]Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 32.

[33]Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 127.

Huks felt so secure within Huklandia that, by 1948, training camps, command bases, schools, and production bases were reestablished across central Luzon, much as was done during World War II.[34] With its center at the 3,400 foot tall Mount Arayat, the Huk stronghold spread south across the marshy and seasonally flooded Candaba Swamp, east to the Sierra Madre mountains, and west to the mountains of Zambales province.[35] As they solidified control over this broad area, the Huks increasingly integrated military and political/cultural activities to cultivate links with the towns and villages. If Taruc's movement was to succeed in the eventual overthrow of the government, he had to have a firm and resolute popular base from which to act.

President Roxas died unexpectedly of a heart-attack while visiting Clark Field in April 1948. Upon hearing the news, Taruc made clear his feelings about both Roxas and the United States when he eulogized the former president as "(dying) symbolically in the arms of his masters .... His faithful adherence to American imperialist interests and the excessive corruption in

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[34]MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations, p. 7.

[35]Peterson, et al., Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 7.

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his government had exposed him to the people."[36] His successor, Elpido Quirino, was more moderate on the issue of the Huks, and after declaring a temporary truce, opened negotiations with Taruc and Alejandrino for the surrender of Huk weapons. After four months of negotiations, during which time both sides violated the truce numerous times, the talks broke off. Taruc returned to the mountains on 29 August 1948 and rejoined his forces. Although Taruc blamed the failed talks on Quirino's bad faith, there was really no valid reason for the Huks to surrender -- they were beating government troops in the field and expanding their support base almost at will. Taruc used the four months to reorganize and strengthen his position in Huklandia, establish new arms caches, and use public gatherings to spread propaganda and incite the crowds against the Quirino government.[37]

1948 proved a difficult year for Huk political/military cooperation. The Politburo, now under the leadership of Jose Lava, wished to pursue the Russian model of class struggle by concentrating on urban centers and disrupting government activities to bring about the communist overthrow. The Huks however, under Taruc, were more Maoist in outlook and, based on its peasant base, wanted to expand its rural base and continue the fight in the countryside. The argument over where to concentrate Huk efforts caused a rift within the organization. Although the rift did not prove fatal to either camp, it reduced the effectiveness of both the CPP Marxist-Leninists and the Huk Maoists. Furthermore, when the tide of battle turned to favor the government after 1950, old scars caused by this dissention opened once again and helped to bring about the end of the entire movement.

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[36]Luis Taruc, Born of the People, (Bombay: People's Publishing House. LTD., 1953), p. 258.

[37]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 69; White, Why Insurgency Was Defeated, p. 6; and Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 131.

In November, the military wing of the movement changed its name to the Hukbong Magapalaya ng Bayan, the People's Liberation Army, commonly referred to as the HMB. Drawing on the support garnished during the summer truce, the HMB started a new series of raids on government troops and targets. Throughout the following year, 1949, HMB raids continued against government installations in and around central Luzon. Most of the raids were typical guerrilla operations, hit-and-run, and were usually conducted at night to avoid direct confrontation with AFP forces. Despite their numerous ambuscades and raids on banks and supply depots, the HMB did not participate in the old guerrilla favorite - sabotage. This was not only because they lacked trained demolition men or equipment, but also because the Huks relied heavily on government transportation and communication facilities for their own purposes.[38]

The Huk campaign that began in November 1948 reached its peak in April 1949, with the ambush of Señora Aurora Quezon, widow of the former Philippine president. Commander Alexander Viernes, alias Stalin, took two hundred men and laid an ambush along a small country road in the Sierra Madres mountains and waited for a motorcade carrying Sra. Quezon, her daughter, and several government officials. When the ambush ended, Senora Quezon, her daughter, the mayor of Quezon City, and numerous government troops lay dead alongside the road. Although Viernes claimed a great victory, people throughout the islands, including many in central Luzon, were outraged. Viernes misjudged his target's popularity. President Quezon left a strong nationalistic sentiment after his death in exile during the war, and his widow represented the spirit of Philippine nationalism and resistance. Feeling the swell of popular indignation about the death of a national hero's wife and family, Taruc denied

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[38]Azama, The Huk and the NPA, p. 137.

responsibility and said that the ambush was conducted without HMB approval. Despite his attempts to disclaim the actions of an overzealous Commander Viernes, Taruc lost a great deal of popular support and confidence over the incident, confidence he never fully regained and support that he would need later, but would not find forthcoming.[39]

Huk political organizers took full advantage of conditions that accompanied the 1949 general election. In a race that pitted Jose Laurel, the Nacionalista Party candidate and former president under the Japanese occupation, against Quirino, the incumbent Liberal Party candidate, the Huks seemed to enjoy the violence and mud-slinging that had become part of Philippine politics. Each new charge raised by one candidate against the other provided new ammunition for the Huk cause. The Politburo finally decided to support Quirino, the more liberal of the two candidates, and ordered the organization to work for his election. Huk goon-squads joined those from the Liberal Party and battled similar "political action groups" from the opposition for control of the election.[40]

On election day, thugs from both sides intimidated voters at the polls, ballot boxes were stuffed or disappeared mysteriously, and in more than one province the number of ballots cast far outnumbered the entire population.[41] Quirino won a slim victory, but at the cost of widespread popular despair about Philippine democracy. Many of the disillusioned turned to the communists as being the only hope for reducing corruption, violence, and the disregard for individual rights that had become ingrained in society.

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[39]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 18.

[40]MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations, p. 9.

[41]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 82.

Aided greatly by the horrible conditions that accompanied the 1949 election, Huk strength and influence grew by the end of the year, recovering somewhat from the Quezon ambush episode. HMB regular strength grew to between 12-14,000 and Taruc could rely on 100,000 active supporters in central Luzon. After the elections (fraught with fraud, terror, and rampant electioneering violations), Huk raids became more frequent and widespread. A Huk squadron occupied the town of San Pablo; Police Constabulary posts at San Mateo and San Rafael were attacked and the towns looted; and the mayor of Montablan was kidnapped and held for ransom.[42] After most of these attacks, Huks left propaganda pamphlets with the people seeking their aid and support, and playing on their growing sense of disaffection for the government that resulted from election fraud. As the guerrillas strengthened their control in Tarlac, Bulacaan, Nueva Ecija, and Pampanga provinces, most government officials left their offices every day before nightfall, returning to the relative safety of homes they maintained in Manila.[43]

Supporting communist claims, the election was a signal from the administration for corruption to run amuck. All forms of government permits and contracts were bought and sold openly, while favoritism and nepotism spread rapidly throughout the government.[44] Bolstered by new supporters that governmental policies provided, and against a backdrop of near governmental collapse into fraud and corruption, the Huk Politburo declared the existence of the "Revolutionary Situation" in January 1950, and called for the beginning of the armed overthrow of the

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[42]Azama, The Huk and the N.P.A., p. 84; and Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 18.

[43]Peterson, et al., Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 16.

[44]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 84.

government.[45] Jose Lava, the political leader of the CPP, advanced the communist timetable for the overthrow of the Philippine government by approximately two years and was met with immediate and harsh criticism from Taruc. Although Lava saw the situation favoring increased communist initiatives for military actions, political expansion, and mobilization of the masses, Taruc did not. Rather, Taruc felt it premature to attempt the overthrow and desired to maintain the original agenda and limit activities to guerrilla operations and the expansion of their popular base.

The two leaders could not reconcile their differences and, in late January, Taruc broke ranks with the CPP dominated political wing of the movement. Undoubtedly, part of this rift was a result of long-standing political differences between the CPP from the HMB. As was the case surrounding an earlier rift between the two in 1948, the CPP tended to follow Marxist-Leninist strategy while Taruc and his HMB were more inclined to adhere to Maoist theory based on peasant revolt. Following the split, Taruc and the HMB continued to carry-on the guerrilla campaign against the Quirino government with almost daily raids across central Luzon. Attacks spread to both the north and south of the central plain and outlying districts of Manila were no longer spared from guerrilla intrusions. Even small Philippine Army outposts, usually avoided in the early years of the insurrection, now joined PC barracks on the Huk target list.

As the attacks increased to some ten times their pre-1950 frequency, President Quirino abandoned his conciliatory stance toward the rebels. In a last-ditch effort to stop the insurgency, he ordered the armed forces to assume the responsibility for combatting the insurgents and to return to the terror tactics that the Roxas administration had once used so

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[45]Military Assistance Institute.

widely. Quirino's change of heart, taken out of pure frustration, did little to hinder Taruc's operations but did manage to remind the people why they had shifted their support to the Huks in 1946.[46] In response to renewed AFP/PC terror and intimidation tactics, the Huks also reverted to this most base form of warfare, leaving bodies in streets with tags on them that read: "He resisted the Huks." In one case they quartered a Catholic priest before a group of his parishioners who had assisted government forces.[47]

Attacks against three major cities by squadron sized or larger units took place in May, and were followed in August, by a series of large-scale attacks directed against Army barracks. On 26 August, two simultaneous attacks were launched against garrisons at Camp Macabulos (in Tarlac) and at Santa Cruz (in Laguna), involving no less than 500 Huk regulars. At Camp Macabulos, two squadrons killed twenty-three army officers and men and seventeen civilians before releasing seventeen Huk prisoners and burning and looting the camp's storehouse and hospital. Meanwhile at Santa Cruz, three hundred Huks sacked and looted the town, killed three policemen and fled to Pila in stolen vehicles before government reinforcements could be mustered.[48]

These attacks were examples of the first of three varieties of raids that Taruc planned to carry-out against the government--organized assaults. The second variety, terror raids, were conducted by smaller formations against undefended cities and barrios, with the intent of killing government officials and intimidating the populations. Finally, Taruc planned to conduct

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[46]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 84.

[47]William O. Douglas, North From Malaya: Adventure on Five Fronts, (NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1953), p. 107.

[48]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," pp. 19-20.

nuisance raids -- small ambushes, roadblocks, or hijackings that would harass government forces and demonstrate Huk control over certain regions. These attacks were usually planned to coincide with national festivals or fiestas, when security would be lax or, during the rainy season when weather conditions would favor hit-and-run tactics by his HMB that now numbered 15,000 regulars (with 13,000 weapons), 100,000 active supporters, and a popular base estimated to number nearly a million peasants in central Luzon.[49]

While Taruc's HMB forces increased their military pressure on the government, Lava ordered party activists to increase the tempo of their activities to ease the path for the armed revolution -- a revolution that the Politburo estimated would topple the Philippine government in 1951.[50] These grandiose plans; calling for a total Huk force of some thirty-six divisions that would have 56,000 cadre, 172,000 party members, and a mass base of 2.5 million supporters; fell apart quickly when the Politburo was unexpectedly captured by government troops in October 1950.[51]

ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES OPERATIONS

In 1946, the Armed Forces of the Philippines consisted of only 25,000 poorly trained, armed, and led troops scattered throughout the islands. The AFP was the remains of the war-time

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[49]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 92; and Peterson, et al, Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 17.

[50]From a captured document of the Communist Party of the Philippines, "Document on Strategy and Tactics of the Philippine Communist Party," 22 December 1950, in MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations, p. 10.

[51]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 19.

Philippine military and police forces, reduced rapidly after the war from their former strength of some 132,000.[52] The Philippine Military Police Corps was the result of General MacArthur's authorization to form thirteen military police companies, armed as police, to maintain internal peace and order.[53] In addition to the Army and MPC forces, the government had a small Navy (some 3,000 sailors), and an equally small and outdated Air Force (only 3,800 men). Other than participating in a few resupply missions, the Air Force did not play an important role during the initial phase of the insurrection. After 1950, the Air Force role increased in size and function as it assumed a larger part of the overall anti-Huk campaign.

In Manila, the government treated the Huk problem as simply a series of criminal acts, not an organized and well established insurrection. President Roxas vowed to attack the guerrillas with a "mailed fist" but, except for independent forays by ambitious local authorities and a few military police units, the mailed fist was stuffed with cotton. When the government mounted operations against the Huks, it seldom succeeded in anything but alienating the local villagers who felt the brunt of the troops' frustrations.[54] Roxas seemed more amenable to seeking the spoils of office for himself and his followers than to fighting Huks on their homeground.

In June 1946, Roxas admitted the futility of his plan to "exterminate" the guerrillas and attempted to negotiate an agreement with Taruc. Promises of agrarian reforms in exchange for the surrender of weapons were broken and negotiations ceased.

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[52]MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations, p. 1,

[53]Valeriano, "Military Operations," p. 26.

[54]Fred Poole and Max Vanzi, Revolution in the Philippines: The United States in a Hall of Cracked Missors, (NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984), p. 26.

The government returned to its policy of haphazard operations in central Luzon, but with no better results than it had had before the truce. Government forces stayed close to their barracks and bands of "Civil Guards" (private armies hired by landlords), tried to protect plantations and went on occasional, and always unproductive, "Huk hunts."

After the November elections, both sides reduced military activities to consolidate and reorganize. The Army was exhausted from futile dashes into the swamps and mountains and needed the time to train with weapons they were receiving from U.S. stocks of surplus World War II arms. By January 1947, Roxas, always keen to improve his political standing, took advantage of the relative calm and declared the situation solved. His declaration was soon met by a resurgence of activity centered in Huklandia.[55]

Embarrassed over his premature declaration, Roxas ordered a major offensive in March, 1947. In the largest and most organized government effort since the end of the war, three battalions of regular forces and military police units advanced into the area around Mount Arayat. Accompanied on the expedition by numerous newspaper reporters, food vendors, and sightseers, the two thousand government troops waded ever so slowly into the Huk stronghold. Although they managed to capture about a hundred insurgents, the operation did not damage Taruc militarily -- it merely made him more cautious and showed him that he needed a better intelligence organization.[56] Following this offensive, Roxas dismantled the Military Police Command and formed the Police Constabulary (PC) in its stead, with the mission to provide internal security for the country and to perform other police-style functions. The Constabulary was organized into ninety-eight man companies with from one to fifteen companies

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[55]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 73.

[56]Ibid.; and White, Why Insurgency Was Defeated, p. 5.

assigned to a Provincial Provost Marshall depending on the size and location of the province. In turn, the Provost Marshall worked directly for the Provincial Governor.[57]

In March 1948, after the collapse of another brief truce, Roxas declared the Hukbalahap illegal and announced that he was putting his "mailed fist" policy back into effect. Company after company of constabulary troops charged into Huklandia burning entire villages, slaughtering farm animals, and killing or imprisoning many innocent peasants in their search for the elusive insurgents.[58] They located few Huks, killed or captured even fewer, and alienated almost the entire population of the region from the central government.

Shortly after Roxas' death in April 1948, President Quirino offered the Huks another chance to negotiate a settlement. As was the established pattern for these truces, the negotiations proved fruitless but the Huks put the months of government inactivity to good use by increasing their internal training and organization. When this truce finally broke-down, Quirino was forced to acknowledge that the insurgency was indeed a major problem, one too large for the constabulary to handle alone. To alleviate this shortcoming, he assigned one regular army battalion, the 5th Battalion Combat Team (BCT) to the PC.[59] Two years later, after the 5th BCT was badly beaten in an engagement with the guerrillas, Quirino reorganized the constabulary under the Secretary of National Defense, removing it from the

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[57]Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 114.

[58]William Moore, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, 1948-1954: An Analysis of the Roles, Missions, and Doctrine of the Philippine Military Forces, Report of the Institute of Advances Studies (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [1971]), p. 11.

[59]Peterson, et al., Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 15.

jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior where it had languished since 1945.

"Force X"

Shortly after the Secretary of National Defense reorganized the constabulary, the government authorized the one truly successful anti-insurgent operation during the first phase of the insurrection -- "Force X." This special force was envisaged to operate deep within enemy territory under the guise of being a Huk unit itself. As such, the force would be valuable in obtaining intelligence and carrying out small unit operations such as kidnappings of Huk leaders and ambuscades. "Force X" was created to take advantage of a period when Huks operated freely in central Luzon but when their command organization was loose and inexperienced.[60]

Philippine Army Colonel Napoleon Valeriano, commander of the Nenita Unit, a special constabulary force that operated in the area of Mount Arayat from 1946 until 1949, selected the 16th Police Constabulary company, under the command of Lieutenant Marana to become "Force X". Secretly screening his unit for the most devoted and aggressive men, Marana selected three officers and forty-four enlisted men who departed their barracks under the cover of darkness and moved to a secret training camp in the nearby jungle. The camp's location and purpose were known only to the president, the Army Chief of Staff, Col. Valeriano, and three of the president's closest staff officers. At the camp, the unit was stripped of issued clothing and equipment, and given captured weapons and old civilian clothes. Using three captured guerrillas as instructors, "Force X" received training in Huk customs, practices, and tactics to help them pass as the enemy.

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[60]Valeriano, "Military Operations," p. 27.

Each man assumed an alias as well as a nickname, a technique favored by the Huks, and began to live life as a guerrilla.[61]

After four weeks of intensive training and a careful reconnaissance into the area where "Force X" would initially venture, the unit was almost ready to go. To complete the scenario, Colonel Valeriano recruited two walking-wounded from an Army hospital in Manila and secretly transported them to the training camp. At 1700 hrs, 14 April 1948, "Force X" fought a sham battle with two police companies and withdrew with their "wounded" into Huk country. Four hours later they were met by Huk troops, interrogated as to who they were and where they had come from, and were taken into Candaba Swamp where they met Squadrons 5 and 17. Marana convinced the commander of his authenticity (a story based on the death of a genuine Huk leader) and was promised that he and his forces would be taken to Taruc. The cover was working better than expected.[62]

"Force X" spent two days at the base-camp learning a great deal about local officials, mayors, and police chiefs who were Huk sympathizers and about informants within the constabulary. As they awaited their appointment with Taruc, they were joined by two other squadrons, one of which was an "enforcement squadron" whose members specialized in assassination and kidnapping. On the sixth day in camp, Marana became suspicious of Huk attitudes and ordered his men to prepare to attack the assemblage. Quietly removing heavy weapons (including four 60mm mortars, two light machine-guns, 200 grenades, and a radio) from hidden compartments in their packs, "Force X" attacked the unsuspecting squadrons.

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[61]Ibid., p. 36.

[62]Ibid.

In a thirty-minute firefight, "Force X" killed eighty-two Huks, one local mayor, and captured three squadron commanders.[63]

After radioing for reinforcements to secure the area, "Force X" took off on a two week long search and destroy mission, accompanied this time by two infantry companies. During seven engagements, government troops killed another twenty-one guerrillas, wounded and captured seven, and identified seventeen Huks in local villages. "Force X's" success did not stop when it withdrew at the end of the operation. Three weeks after the incident at the Huk base-camp, two squadrons stumbled onto each other and, each assuming that the other unit was "Force X," opened fire. The panic and mistrust that "Force X" put into Huk ranks cost the insurgents eleven more dead from this chance encounter.[64]

AFP Tactical Operations

Unfortunately, "Force X" was practically the only bright spot for the government during 1946-1950 and it was fielded too infrequently. Most other operations remained bound to conventional tactics involving large units. Task forces continued to be ordered out only following some Huk victory or atrocity that made political waves in Manila. Even when an operation reached its announced objective, follow-up operations were rare and troops usually returned immediately to garrison. These conventional sweeps proved ineffective and left many other areas totally bare of government troops. As a final detriment, most of the large operations harmed civilians more than the guerrillas. This did very little to develop feelings of

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[63]Ibid., p. 36.

[64]Ibid., p. 37.

confidence or allegiance between the people and their central government.[65]

Poor tactical leadership, slow responsiveness, slipshod security, and inadequate logistic support characterized the majority of military operations during this period. Troops were forced to live off the land, or rather, to live off the villagers. Enlisted men lacked discipline while their officers, often engaged in large-scale corruption themselves, did little to correct the situation. Although these officers were often implicated in Manila-based scandals, Army leadership did nothing.[66]

Throughout 1948, the Philippine military remained ineffectual in Luzon's central plain. What little progress took place was instigated by President Quirino on a political level through negotiations with Taruc. For a brief time, Quirino returned Taruc's congressional seat and back-pay, but after months of debating and public denunciations from both sides, Taruc rejoined his guerrillas in the mountains in August to resume the fight.[67] His return to the countryside produced increased government actions that hurt relations between the people and the largely out-of-touch and uncaring central government.

Government forces changed little during 1949 with the exception that the Police Constabulary grew modestly in size. However, whatever increased effectiveness that could have been achieved from this expansion was lost when the police companies were broken into platoon sized units and scattered across the

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[65]Ibid., p. 27.

[66]Ibid., p. 29.

[67]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 77.

nation - in essence, losing their numerical and equipment advantage to the Huks, still concentrated in central Luzon. Too often, these new constabulary units were used solely to administer local law, serve warrants, and try to keep the peace in "their" village. This led to a tacit modus vivendi between the police and guerrillas in an area.[68] Dedicated anti-Huk operations by either the Philippine Army or the Police Constabulary remained few in number and insignificant in effect with the exception of the government operation mounted after Huks murdered Sra. Quezon on 28 April.

Ordered by President Quirino not to return to garrison until all the Huks who ambushed Señora Quezon were themselves either dead or captured, 4,000 troops (two constabulary battalions and one army battalion) went into the Sierra Madres mountains. Divided into three task forces, one to block and two to maneuver, the force scoured the mountain-sides. After two weeks of relentless patrolling, a Huk camp was discovered and while taking it, government troops captured a Huk liaison officer who told them the location of Commander Viernes' base-camp near Mount Guiniat.[69] Five companies converged on the mountain camp at dawn, 1 June 1949, but killed only eleven guerrillas before discovering the camp was only an outpost, not Viernes' base. The following day, government forces located the base-camp and attacked immediately. The troops captured the camp, that turned out to be "Stalin University," and in the ensuing week long search and destroy mission killed thirty-seven additional Huks. Commander Viernes, however, managed to elude the net once again. After two more months of searching the mountains, the Philippine Army cornered Viernes near Kangkong and killed him on 11 September. His death, along with the deaths of many of his

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[68]Valeriano, "Military Operations," p. 26.

[69]Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, pp. 117-118.

captains and several other Huk commanders, ended the operation that had spanned nearly four months. All toll, 146 insurgents were killed, 40 captured, and an entire Huk regional command was destroyed during the operation.[70]

However, after the conclusion of the Sierra Madres offensive, conditions in the Philippine military returned to their old form of normalcy -- ineffectiveness, corruption, and no efforts whatsoever to help the local villagers. Army checkpoints became "collection points" where troops extorted money from local citizens. The Philippine Chief of Staff discovered this situation when he (wearing civilian clothing) was stopped by a group of soldiers who demanded money from him. On Good Friday, 1950, army troops massacred 100 men, women, and children in Bacalor, Pampanga, and burned 130 homes in retaliation for the killing of one of their officers.[71] In Laguna, fifty farmers attending a community dance were placed before a wall and executed as "suspected Huk."[72] The Philippine Air Force also contributed to the government's loss of popular support. It acquired several P-51 Mustangs from the United States in 1947, and used them to strafe and bomb suspect locations. Unfortunately, these aerial raids caused more damage to civilians than to the Huks, and in mid-1950, the government placed tighter controls over the use of the fighter-bombers. In general then, government forces were treating the people worse than were the guerrillas, who while occasionally preying on a village, did try

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[70]Ibid., p. 121; and Swarbrick, The Evolution of Communist Insurgency, p. 17.

[71]Douglas, North From Malaya, p. 118; and Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 97.

[72]Edwin J. McCarren, Personal Leadership: An Element of National Power, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [8 April 1966]). p. 28.

to maintain close ties with the majority of the population in central Luzon.[73]

By mid-1950 it was obvious that the Philippine armed forces simply were not holding their own against the Huks. They lacked both direction and an overall campaign strategy. Orders went directly from AFP GHQ in Manila to army units in the field. The intelligence effort was sadly lacking and no plans were in the offing to improve it. What plans were being made involved defensive operations around towns or the estates of large landowners or businessmen. The AFP was acting more as an army of occupation than as a combat force attempting to quell a rebellion. Patrols stayed close to base and invariably returned to garrison before dark. Local commanders were satisfied to continue this practice as long as their individual areas of responsibility remained out of the headlines in Manila.[74]

The Army suffered from neglected training in maneuver, communications, security, intelligence, and the use of available firepower.[75] Though they tended to remain in a single area for years, local forces never gained a working knowledge of the terrain, preferring instead to stick to known paths near the base. The soldiers were often antagonistic to the local population, whom they saw as Huk sympathizers and treated accordingly. And, compounding all of these deficiencies, the

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[73]Peterson, et al, Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 15.

[74]MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations, p. 11.

[75]As of July 1950, AFP weapons and equipment included: .30 carbines; .30 light machine-guns; .30 M1 rifles; .30 Springfield rifles; .45 pistols; .50 machine-guns; 20mm, 37mm, 40mm and 57mm guns; 60mm, 81mm, and 105mm mortars; 75mm and 105mm howitzers; scout and armored cars; half-tracks; light and medium M5 and M4 tanks; and a variety of utility and cargo vehicles. Report, US JUSMAG-PHIL, "Weekly Summary of Activities," 20 July 1950. MMRD, RG 334 (Interservice Agencies) JUSMAG-Phil, box 6, NARA, Washington, D.C.

soldier was poorly educated as to the purpose of the campaign. He simply didn't understand his role and therefore lacked motivation. Those above him seemed as equally unconcerned, more interested in graft, corruption, and a comfortable life than with fighting.[76]

The Philippine armed forces, numbering a total of 30,952 men in July 1950, suffered from this variety of ailments to such a degree that it almost proved fatal. The appointment of Ramon Magsaysay as Secretary of National Defense in mid-1950 helped reverse this trend.[77] Faced with numerous, seemingly insurmountable problems within the armed forces, he had first to conquer these problems before he could begin his campaign against the insurgents in central Luzon.

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[76]MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations, pp. 12-13.

[77]Report, US JUSMAG-Phil, "Weekly Summary of Activities," 8 June 1950. MMRD, RG 334 (Interservice Agencies) JUSMAG Phil, AG Section, box 6, NARA, Washington, D.C.

CHAPTER V

RAMON MAGSAYSAY, EDWARD LANSDALE, AND THE JUSMAG

RAMON MAGSAYSAY

Born the son of a village school teacher in the small village of Iba, the capital of Zambales Province and in the very shadow of Mount Pinatubo, Ramon Magsaysay spent his formative years surrounded by the people of central Luzon. When Ramon was six years old, he learned about honesty and integrity from his father, who lost his teaching job in the public school when he refused to pass the school superintendent's son in his carpentry class. Outcast by the community, the Magsaysay family moved to Castillejas, where his father set up a small carpentry and blacksmith shop to support the family.[1] His father's example took root in Ramon and remained a cornerstone of his personality throughout his life.

Ramon entered Zambales Academy, an equivalent to high school, at the age of thirteen and graduated as salutatorian. In 1927, he enrolled in the Academy of Liberal Arts at the University of the Philippines but was forced to leave because of poor health. After recovering his health, Magsaysay transferred to Jose Rizal College, from which he was graduated in 1932 with a degree in commerce. The only job he could find was as a mechanic at the Try Transportation Bus Company in Manila. Within a few years, he rose to become the company's general manager.[2] At the

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[1]Edwin J. McCarren, Personal Leadership: An Element of National Power, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [8 April 1966]), p. 20.

[2]Clarence G. Barrens, I Promise: Magsaysay's Unique PSYOP "Defeats" HUKS, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, [1970]), p. 46.

outbreak of World War II, he quit his position in Manila and joined the Philippine 31st Infantry Division.

After the fall of Bataan, Magsaysay joined a USAFFE guerrilla unit. Commissioned at the grade of captain, he served as G-1, supply officer, was promoted to major, and eventually became the commander of the Zambales Military District, responsible for the actions of nearly 10,000 USAFFE fighters in the area near Mount Pinatubo. His prowess as a military commander became well known and resulted in the Japanese placing a 100,000 peso bounty on his life.[3] In February 1945, General MacArthur appointed Major Magsaysay the military governor of Zambales due to his honesty, integrity, and ability. During his tenure as military governor he became an outspoken champion for veteran rights and impressed the local population with his dedication to improving their life. A year later, President Roxas asked him to join the Liberal Party and run for a congressional seat in the November election. Magsaysay refused initially, stunning the president, but relented when he was presented a petition signed by 11,000 of his men asking him to run for Congress. Despite his personal differences with Roxas, whose policies Magsaysay saw as favoring only the rich, his men convinced him that he could best help the country by joining the government. He resigned his commission and won a seat in the Philippine House of Representatives with the largest popular margin in Zambales history.[4]

Once in Congress, he continued to fight for veteran rights and was soon appointed to the House Committee on National Defense, the committee with oversight responsibility for the

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[3]Barrens, I Promise, p. 47; and McCarren, Personal Leadership, p. 21.

[4]Carlos P. Romulo and Marvin M. Gran, The Magsaysay Story, (NY: Van Rees Press, 1956), p. 78.

armed forces. He became the committee's chairman after his re-election in 1949 and was instrumental in transferring the Police Constabulary from the Interior Department to the Department of National Defense. Magsaysay was also responsible for the reorganization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines into battalion combat teams, and its assumption of responsibility from the Police Constabulary for the anti-Huk campaign in Luzon.

While Chairman of the Armed Forces Committee, he traveled to Washington in April 1950 on a quest to obtain financial aid for the faltering government in Manila. The importance of this visit was twofold. First, after conferring with General George C. Marshall (who was still in retirement before becoming Secretary of Defense in the fall), and speaking with President Truman and the National Security Council, he received $10 million in emergency aid to pay the military and offer rewards for information about the insurgents and was promised additional assistance under the Military Assistance Agreement of March 1947. Second, and as important for the anti-Huk campaign, he met and befriended newly promoted Lieutenant Colonel Edward G. Lansdale, an Air Force intelligence officer familiar with the Philippines and her people, and who would very shortly become Magsaysay's personal JUSMAG advisor.[5]

On his return to Manila, Magsaysay told President Quirino that Philippine prestige in the United States was at a low ebb as a result of poor social conditions and Huk success in the Luzon countryside. He suggested that the president take immediate steps to purge the government of corrupt officials and institute needed agrarian reforms. The Philippine president suggested that Magsaysay confine his attentions to the military situation and

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[5]Irwin D. Smith, The Philippine Operation Against the Huks: Do Lessons Learned Have Application Today?, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [24 January 1968]), p. 6; and McCarren, Personal Leadership, p. 29.

promptly ignored Magsaysay's comments. After all, Magsaysay had succeeded in bringing home $10 million and the future seemed to promise even more American money and equipment.

Magsaysay and the Philippine Armed Forces

In September 1950, Magsaysay was approached by President Quirino and asked if he would become the Secretary of National Defense. Earlier that summer, the former secretary, Roberto Kangleon, resigned in a dispute with Quirino over reorganization. The President received pressure from many within his administration, as well as from Major General Leland Hobbs, Chief of the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group to the Philippines (JUSMAG), to ask Magsaysay to take the position. Magsaysay agreed to become the new secretary, but only if he was given a "free hand." Reluctantly, Quirino agreed to his terms.[6] Within a few days of his appointment, Magsaysay was approached by a group of officers who asked him if he would join them to overthrow President Quirino. Although he found it difficult to refuse them; not out of a desire for a military coup but, rather because he opposed so much the Quirino administration was doing, or failing to do; he made them a promise, "Give me ninety days. If I haven't done anything by then, go ahead. I promise you."[7]

There is no doubt that he accepted the office with clear-cut plans in mind. He wanted to shake the Philippine military from top to bottom, cleansing its ranks of corrupt, incompetent officers, and indeed, he wanted to change its very role.

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[6]Robert R. Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency: Economic, Political and Military Factors, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, [1963]), p. 100; and Smith, Philippine Operations, p. 86.

[7]William L. Wardon, "Robin Hood of the Islands," Saturday Evening Post CCXXIV (January 12, 1952), p. 76.

Heretofore, the AFP conducted itself much like an army of occupation, seldom venturing afield in search of Huks, unless Manila headlines made it absolutely necessary, and most of the time preying heavily on the local populace. Magsaysay saw the military in a different light. He wanted it to become a major part of a large, coordinated development plan for the country, a plan that would incorporate the military as a participant in social reforms and public service.[8] Not only did he demand that his forces abandon corrupt practices, he set the example himself. He refused special treatment, lived from his government salary (about $500 per month) and a small stipend from being the Chairman of the Board of Philippine Airlines, and whenever possible presented a modest appearance in public.[9] Not surprisingly, many within the Philippine military felt nervous about his intentions but felt just as confident that one man could not bring about such dramatic changes. These doubters soon were not only proved incorrect, but became jobless as well.

On his first day as secretary, Magsaysay began to clean his new house. He relieved several high ranking officers, including the Chief of Staff and the Chief of the Constabulary, and ordered other "armchair strategists" to the field. Those reluctant to leave the safety of Manila, or implicated in graft and corruption, were likewise removed. He then began a personal routine that included extensive travelling, talking with troops and civilians alike, and taking quick and decisive actions when he found a situation that warranted it.[10] During these unannounced field trips Magsaysay became convinced that his plans

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[8]Ismael Lapus (Col., AFP), "The Communist Huk Enemy," in Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines 1946-53, (Ft. Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Forces Center and School, [15 June 1961]), p. 20.

[9]Barrens, I Promise, p. 54.

[10]McCarren, Personal Leadership, p. 26.

for the AFP were correct. He found it suffering from low morale, ineffectiveness, poor leadership, and riddled with corruption. Under his enlightened leadership, these conditions changed rapidly.

The secretary personally selected many new, and younger, battalion commanders and ordered most of the units to new areas of operation. By doing this, Magsaysay hoped to destroy cliques within the service and reduce tensions that had built up between local people and Army units over a period of years when units remained assigned to a single area.[11] When Magsaysay discovered an officer under Huk influence, he got rid of him, along with those he considered reluctant to carry the fight to the guerrillas. Favoritism, long an established criteria for promotion, was halted and those who had advanced using it were advanced no further.[12]

On his almost daily excursions to the field, Magsaysay stopped at all AFP sites, regardless of size or location, and made thorough inspections of the men, their equipment, and their facilities. Officers derelict in their duties or involved in graft were relieved on the spot. During one such night visit he found a guard asleep at his post. The secretary took the man's rifle, replaced the soldier at his post, and ordered the soldier to fetch his commander. The soldier was disciplined and his commander was relieved that night.[13] These surprise inspections were so numerous and effective that leaders throughout the military began to improve the condition of their units. In the

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[11]A.H. Peterson, G.C. Reinhardt, and E.E. Conger, eds. Symposium of the Role of Airpower in Counterinsurgency and Unconventional Warfare: The Philippine Huk Campaign, (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, [July 1963]), p. 18.

[12]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 102.

[13]Barrens, I Promise, p. 70.

words of the commander of the 7th BCT, AFP Colonel Napoleon Valeriano, "No commander, even in the most isolated outpost could go to bed at night sure that he would not be awakened at dawn by an irate Secretary of National Defense."[14]

At the same time, Magsaysay was equally fast to reward as to punish. One captain was offered 150,000 pesos to "forget" about a Huk ammunition cache his men discovered. The officer accepted the money, but instead of keeping it, he went immediately to the secretary, who at that time was attending a state dinner to honor President Quirino. Between courses, Magsaysay awarded the captain a cash reward for his honesty and promoted him to major.[15]

In his first twenty days as secretary, he took two other steps that directly affected the soldier in the field. First, using money he acquired from U.S. military assistance funds, he increased pay from only 30 centavos to a full peso per day. Although the pay-scale seems meager, it allowed the soldier to purchase his daily ration from the local people rather than steal or demand it as had often been the case prior. Second, Magsaysay equipped each patrol leader with a camera to document enemy casualties. As has so often been the case in guerrilla wars, accurate numbers of enemy casualties (body counts) proved difficult to verify. Without photos, government claims were not verified unless, as was sometime the case when the cameras broke, the patrol leader brought other positive proof back with him. This proof sometimes included Huk heads or ears strung on rattan cords.[16]

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[14]William B. Steele, Internal Defense in the Philippines: 1946-1954, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, [1967]), p. 8.

[15]Barrens, I Promise, p. 86.

[16]Peterson, et al., Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 25.

Magsaysay stopped and spoke to the local people during each of his inspection tours. He told the people that the police and military forces were there to protect them and, that if they had complaints about his forces, they could tell him and he would take appropriate action. To encourage this communication, Magsaysay authorized free telegrams from villagers and insured that each was answered quickly by himself or his key staff.[17] With programs such as these it did not take long for word to spread about the new secretary and what he expected from his armed forces. Within just a few months, the entire outlook of the AFP was changing for the better.

Soon after becoming Secretary of National Defense, Magsaysay decided that government tactics needed drastic adjustment. Although he had originally favored large-scale conventional sweep operations, he changed his mind as he examined the results from these operations on both the guerrillas and the local populace who seemed to suffer the brunt of such large actions. He was willing to try something new, something not in "the book." When he approached the president with his proposal to change their tactics, Quirino responded: "I have never heard of such tactics. General Castaneda (the Chief of Staff that Magsaysay fired) has never suggested anything like this to me." "Of course not," answered Magsaysay, "Costanedo does not know anything about guerrilla warfare. He does not understand the kind of strategy that has to be practiced against the Huks if we are to defeat them."[18]

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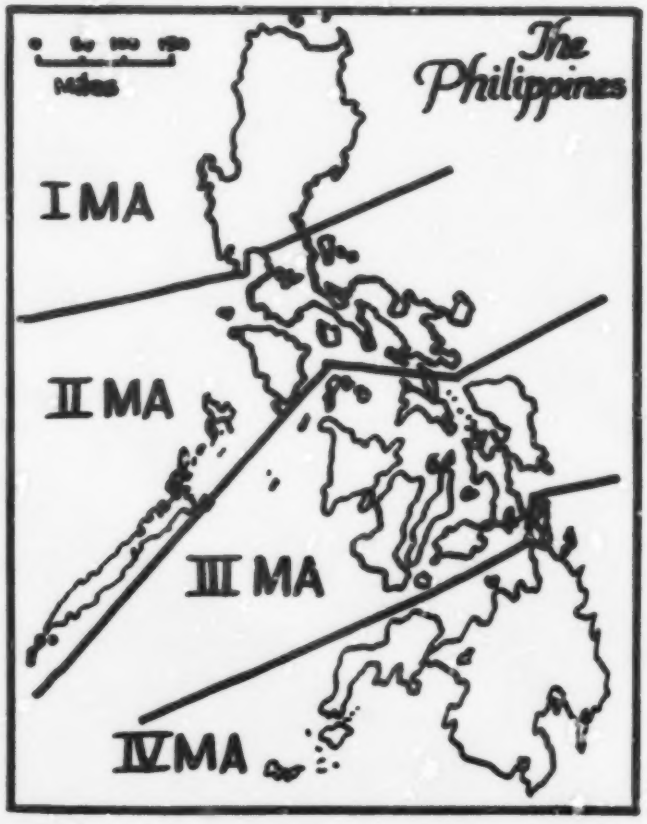
[17]In the first year of the program, Magsaysay received 59,000 telegrams, each of which was answered in three days or less. Clifford M. White, Why Insurgency Was Defeated un the Philippines, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [1967], p. 10.

[18]Romulo, The Magsaysay Story, p. 105.

He decided to base government military tactics on small-unit operations, relying on large convention sweeps only when specific circumstances dictated its use. By doing this he hoped to maintain greater pressure on the Huks, reduce intelligence leaks associated with large operations, and remove the enemy's sense of security in Huklandia. In a speech delivered before the Philippine General Staff, Magsaysay summarized his new tactics: "Gentlemen, I know you all have graduated from military establishments here and in the United States. Now I am telling you to forget everything you were taught at Ft. Leavenworth, Ft. Benning, and the Academy. The Huks are fighting an unorthodox war. We are going to combat them in unorthodox ways. Whatever it was that hurt me most as a guerrilla is what we are going to do now to the Huk."[19]

To support his new strategy, Magsaysay began to increase the size of the Army to twenty-six battalions that would operate in four tactical commands. With help from the JUSMAG, and monies from the Military Defense Assistance Program (MDAP), this ambitious plan was accomplished -- 28,000 troops were added to the AFP by 1955 and the number of constabulary companies increased to ninety-one. Of the twenty-six BCTs, twenty-three were concentrated on Luzon with only two deployed to



[19]Reginald J. Swarbrick, The Evolution of Communist Insurgency in the Philippines, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, [7 June 1983]), p. 30.

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the southern islands. The final battalion remained in Manila in a training/reserve status. Emphasis was placed on patrolling (especially at night), squad/platoon size operations, and hit-and-run tactics similar to those used by Luis Taruc.[20]

Above all other considerations, Magsaysay knew that government terror tactics had to be stopped. From his days as a guerrilla leader, he understood that the campaign depended on gaining the people's support and allegiance. In the past, government attempts to provide relief for the people were destroyed by just a few acts of barbarism against the villagers. He told the military that their function was to protect the people from the Huks and to assist them in whatever ways they could. Each soldier was given two duties: to act as an ambassador of good will toward the people and to kill Huks. Army legal officers were instructed to serve as civilian counsel, free of charge, in court cases involving peasants and landlords, while Magsaysay personally investigated cases of military crimes, harshly punishing those involved. Just three months into his term as secretary, children ran to greet Army trucks when they visited villages rather than running to hide in the jungle as they had done before.[21]

On 23 December 1950, Magsaysay ordered the Police Constabulary placed under Army control for the duration of the Huk campaign. Formed in 1901 as a national police force, the Constabulary was the oldest independent paramilitary organization

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[20]Donald MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations in the Philippines, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [26 March 1956]), p. 16; and White, Why Insurgency Was Defeated, p. 7.

[21]Charles T.R. Bohannan, "Unconventional Warfare," in Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines 1946-53, p. 55; and Napoleon Valeriano and Charles T.R. Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations: The Philippine Experience, (NY, Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 207.

in the country. By subordinating them to the military, a move police accepted only with great anxiety, Magsaysay demonstrated how far he was willing to go to improve the government's posture to fight the insurgency. In another attempt to improve the quality of the constabulary forces, regular army officers were placed in command of PC units and the PC was given additional training and newer weapons and equipment.[22]

The EDCOR Project

As part of his overall strategy to defeat the Huks, Magsaysay incorporated civil resettlement projects with his military campaign. His rural background told him that as long as the peasant felt no obligation to the central government, the guerrillas could continue to prosper in their midst. One of his first efforts to accomplish this began in December 1950 with the formation of the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) that was implemented in conjunction with plans to provide captured or surrendered guerrillas better treatment. He envisioned the Corps operating under direct supervision of the Philippine Chief of Staff, who was strong enough to ensure military cooperation with this civil action. Magsaysay hoped that EDCOR would provide enough incentives for Huks to rejoin mainstream society. If successful, it might entice active Huks to give up their arms once they saw that the government was making progress toward land-reform and private land-ownership.

The program had four primary aims, all centered on resettling former insurgents on government land away from Luzon-- government land to which settlers would be given title. Captured or surrendered Huks who were not wanted for criminal

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[22]Military Assistance Institute, Country Study and Station Report: Philippines, (Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Research, [1964]), p. 49.

activities other than being a guerrilla, could participate in the program. Once screened by Army intelligence, they received a short re-education program and indoctrinated about the benefits of belonging to peaceful society. The Philippine Army transported those selected for the program, with their families, to one of the project sites and there gave them additional education on how to care for the land and advice on what to grow. To provide stability, and in some cases to keep control, the government allowed a small number of retired soldiers to participate in the EDCOR program as well.[23]

In February 1951, a reluctant President Quirino allowed army engineers to depart Luzon for the first EDCOR site on the southern island of Mindinao. Using equipment and supplies obtained through the JUSMAG, they cleared land, erected administration buildings, constructed roads, and prepared sites for settler's homes. Three months later, Magsaysay accompanied the first group of settlers to the project at Kapatangan. Using building materials supplied by the government and with the assistance of AFP troops, the new settlers began to raise their homes and clear their farmland. Each family was given 6-10 hectares (15-25 acres) of farmland, a home garden plot, free transportation, schools, medical care, electricity and clean water. Other basic necessities, such as farm animals, seed, and an initial supply of food, was sold to them on credit by the EDCOR administrators -- always of course, under Magsaysay's watchful eyes. In exchange, the farmers promised, in writing, to farm the land, repay the government for start-up costs, and accept advice from the Philippine Department of Agriculture. Finally, the settlers had to guarantee that they would not sell or sub-divide his land -- tenancy was strictly forbidden.[24]

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[23]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 108.

[24]Ibid., p. 109.

This was truly a contractual agreement between the government and former Huks. Magsaysay hoped that since the program required all parties to work toward a common goal, the participants would develop pride in their accomplishments, unlike other give-away programs that did not require the recipient to devote his own time and labors. The Army helped clear the land, worked daily with the people, and provided the community with utilities. This became very important to the settlers, most of whom did not have the luxury of electricity before.[25] The farmers were given title to the land on condition they develop and live on it.

EDCOR's success came early and surpassed everyone's expectations. Applicants soon outnumbered available plots and many Luzon peasants paid their own way to Mindinao in attempts to get some land adjacent to EDCOR sites. By November 1951 it was obvious that the program needed to be expanded and a second EDCOR site was started on Mindinao. The second site proved as successful as the first and was itself followed by two more sites on Luzon, outside of contested areas, in 1954.[26]

EDCOR also provided Magsaysay with a great propaganda victory. It not only gave the farmer a chance to own land, it undercut the foundation upon which the Huk campaign was based. "Land for the Landless," once the Huk slogan, now belonged to the government. Although Huks tried several times to sabotage EDCOR projects and spread word that EDCOR projects were concentration camps, persistent rumors about the wonderful conditions at the projects made these Huk attempts counterproductive.[27] Glowing reports and stories about EDCOR spread beyond the Philippines to

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[25]Peterson, et al., Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 30.

[26]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurrection, p. 109.

[27]Smith, Philippine Operations, p. 10.

China and Malaya as well. British officials from Malaya came to see the "huge" generators they had heard were being used to power the settlements. What they found were small army generators providing electricity to the farmer's homes. The actual size of the generators was unimportant, that word of the good EDCOR conditions had spread throughout the Philippines and beyond was significant. Before the end of the insurrection, many guerrillas surrendered to government troops and the first thing that they asked was how they could get their own farm.[28]

By 1955, government officials estimated that 1,500 guerrillas had surrendered or simply quit the resistance to take advantage of EDCOR. Without this imaginative program, the Philippine government estimated it would have taken the efforts of 30,000 troops to eliminate that portion of the insurrection. Some five thousand-two hundred people (1,200 families) were resettled from central Luzon to EDCOR projects.[29] But the final results of EDCOR went beyond the number of people that were resettled. The program demonstrated the willingness and dedication of the Magsaysay administration to change the way government treated its peasant farmers. From the program's first success in Mindinao, the psychological effect on the people of Luzon was dramatic and served to undercut the support that Taruc and his guerrilla movement relied upon.

Magsaysay and the Filipino People

Few people have directly affected an entire population as Ramon Magsaysay. His honesty, unpretentious aire, and deep

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[28]Peterson, et al., Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 30; and Lansdale interview, p. 17.

[29]Fred Poole and Max Vanzi, Revolution in the Philippines: The United States in a Hall of Cracked Mirrors, (NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984), p. 32.

concern with the problems faced by his countrymen forged a bond with the common man that was unprecedented in Philippine history. He lived in an unprotected home (at least until he was convinced to move into Lansdale's guarded residence within the JUSMAG compound), wore simple clothes, frequently drove his own car, and spoke in a manner easily understood by all. To make sure that the people knew what he was striving for, he traveled daily across his nation, visiting military installations and civilian communities alike, asking questions and listening to what his people had to say. As one villager told a journalist about Magsaysay: "The government never comes here to see how we live. The only man who comes to these parts is Magsaysay," and adding a bit of prophecy, "Maybe he should be president. At least he knows how badly we need his help, and seems to be the only one interested in the welfare of the barrios."[30]

Magsaysay normally wore common civilian clothing on his travels -- an "aloha" shirt and slacks. Unlike other government officials who traveled amidst great pomp, Magsaysay's ordinary appearance lent credence to his reform plans and helped him gain the people's trust. On one occasion, however, his appearance almost cost him a long and uncomfortable walk through the Philippine countryside. With his personal advisor, Lt. Col. Lansdale, he had flown by helicopter to what he thought was walking distance from a village. After walking for some time, the two realized that they had misjudged the distance and tried to catch a ride with passing motorists. Finally one driver stopped when he saw Lansdale, who was in uniform, but hesitated to give a ride to the other man, whom he did not recognize. Only after Lansdale convinced the Filipino that his companion was the

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[30]Richard M. Leighton, Ralph Sanders, and Jose N. Tinio, The HUK Rebellion: A Case Study in the Social Dynamics of Insurrection, (Washington, D.C.: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, [March 1964]), p. 23.

secretary of national defense, did the wary driver permit Magsaysay to get into his car.[31]

Besides his concern for the people, Magsaysay's honesty became synonymous with his administration. When he found graft or corruption he was quick to act against those involved. "Everytime I sit here and look at my stamp drawer," recalled a local postmaster, "I start to think, well, I don't have much money and my family needs food, maybe I ought to swipe some. Then I start thinking that that damn Magsaysay might suddenly show up ... just as my hand is going into the petty cash drawer, and he'd throw me in jail."[32]

The new secretary of national defense's popularity and fame did not escape Taruc's notice. During his first year in office, Magsaysay was the target of several Huk assassination attempts. Fortunately, all of these attempts failed and in one case, the agent was "turned" after having a long discussion with Magsaysay.[33]

One of several young men sent to assassinate Magsaysay during his first year as secretary was Thomas Santiago, known as "Manila Boy." Santiago was one of Luis Taruc's personal bodyguards and totally dedicated to the Huk cause. Leaving the mountains with grenades and pistols hidden in his clothing, he went to Manila where, while watching the secretary's office, he overheard a group of citizens talking about Magsaysay. To his great surprise, they were praising the secretary as a new national hero. When young Santiago challenged their contentions, he was taken aside by a former guerrilla leader and told that he

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[31]Lansdale interview.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Edward G. Lansdale, In the Midst of Wars, (NY: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 46.

should talk to Magsaysay to see if what he heard was indeed the truth. The following morning, Santiago did just that. After an hour of often heated debate, Santiago shook Magsaysay's hand, turned his weapons over to the secretary, and told him, "I came to kill you. Now please, let me work for you."[34] As was the case with several Huk personalities during Magsaysay's term, "Manila Boy" went to work for the secretary, touring the country and telling all who would listen to him of Magsaysay's dedication to the people and the nation.

This episode however, should not suggest that Magsaysay's personality and charisma overcame all adversity -- it did not. Several other assassins arrived in Manila, but they too failed to kill Magsaysay. The secretary was by then living with Lansdale in a Manila residence quietly protected by a special team of Filipino bodyguards who specialized in stealth and night operations. Although never publicized, several "hit teams" were quietly dispatched by these extraordinary bodyguards. One might wonder why these attacks were kept secret -- Lansdale recalls Magsaysay saying that it would be best to remain silent and let Taruc wonder what happened to his men, ie, were they killed or had they deserted.[35]

MAGSAYSAY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH EDWARD G. LANSDALE

A prominent factor in the successful anti-guerrilla campaign was the close, personal relationship that developed between Edward Lansdale and Ramon Magsaysay. This relationship provided an effective conduit through which American advice affected Philippine actions during this period. To overlook

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[34]William O. Douglas, **North From Malaya: Adventure on Five Fronts**, (NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1953), pp. 103-105.

[35]Lansdale interview.

Lansdale's role would be to neglect a significant chapter of this story.

The relationship began in 1950 when they first met at a Washington reception for the visiting Secretary of National Defense. Magsaysay came to the United States to encourage U.S. support for his government's growing fight against the Huks. Lansdale, who served as an intelligence officer for the OSS and the Military Intelligence Service in the Philippines during the war and who had but recently been promoted to lieutenant colonel, was then teaching intelligence and counter-guerrilla operations at the Air Force Strategic Intelligence School at Lowry Air Force Base. Lansdale received a call from an old friend, Philippine Colonel Montemayor, telling him that he should meet the new Philippine secretary. "I'm with quite a man," Montemayor told Lansdale, "and you've got to get to know him."[36] At the Ft. Myer reception, Lansdale caught both Magsaysay's ear and imagination. Later that year, as the JUSMAG began to play a more prominent role in the anti-Huk effort, Magsaysay asked President Quirino to request Lansdale's assignment to the JUSMAG.

Shortly after his arrival in the Philippines with his assistant, U.S. Army Maj. Charles T.R. Bohannan, Lansdale was invited to dinner by Magsaysay at his home near Manila. Concerned with visible guerrilla activity in the neighborhood and the lack of security for the Secretary, Lansdale invited him to share his room in the house he lived in within the JUSMAG compound in Manila. Magsaysay accepted the offer, sent his wife and children back to his wife's family on Bataan, and moved in with the U.S. advisor. Thus began the intimate relationship that existed between the two military men until Magsaysay's untimely death in 1957.

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[36]Ibid.

Although assigned to the JUSMAG as a G-2 advisor, Lansdale was given exceptional freedom of action and quickly became Magsaysay's de facto personal advisor. Often the two talked long into the night about conditions that fostered the insurrection and about the real need for governmental and social reforms as a prelude to a permanent solution to the Huk problem. Early each morning the Secretary would rouse Lansdale from his bed and together they made daily inspection tours around the nation. To maintain this close personal contact, Lansdale obtained special permission from the Chief of JUSMAG, General Hobbs, to make these forays into contested areas to see firsthand the condition of the Philippine armed forces. Other than Lansdale and Bohannan, JUSMAG advisors were prohibited from taking the field with their counterparts. It was during these visits, and during frequent informal coffee-chats, that Lansdale was able to discuss the real causes for the insurrection with Magsaysay, his assistants, and other concerned government officials. Shortly thereafter, Magsaysay took steps to revitalize the military, improve pay and morale, eliminate corrupt officers, and foster his campaign to win the people back to the central government.

As part of the rejuvenation campaign, Lansdale, with Magsaysay's active support, helped establish intelligence schools and a Philippine Military Intelligence Corps. As graduates from these schools joined forces in the field, battalion combat team commanders became convinced of the importance of intelligence to their operations, the battle began to shift to the government. During the next few years, programs initiated by Magsaysay gradually took the revolution away from the Huks. The people saw clear evidence of military professionalism, competence, and honesty (quite a dramatic change) and through the military's behavior, began to realize that Magsaysay was working for their benefit. The soldiers became heros to the people "White Hats," and received more and more of their active support.

Late in 1953, Lansdale was ordered back to Washington to prepare for an assignment with the O'Daniel mission to Vietnam. After completing his first French lesson, Lansdale was called at home by President Magsaysay and asked to return to the Philippines. Lansdale told his old friend that he was unable to come back but, after the Philippine President made another call to President Eisenhower, Lansdale found himself in Manila early in 1954. This time, he was only able to remain until May, when he was ordered to continue on to Vietnam "to do there what you did in the Philippines."[37]

To what did Edward Lansdale credit his success? First and foremost, he dealt with Magsaysay and the Filipinos as friends and equals. Filipinos viewed friendship as a deeper and longer-lived relationship than Americans did. To them, friendship involved total acceptance into their most valued social institution -- the family. Trusting the Filipinos, allowing them to form their own solutions to their problems with a minimum of interference, and always treating them as equals were Lansdale's keys to success. He advised them on counter-guerrilla tactics and helped them lessen their reliance on conventional operations, but he always made sure they were responsible for the decisions. He maintained a low-profile and allowed Filipinos to take credit for successful operations, concurrently building pride and confidence in the AFP and their fellow countrymen. As retired Maj. Gen. Lansdale so aptly put it, the Filipinos best knew the problems, best knew how to solve them, and did it -- with U.S. aid and advice, but without U.S. domination of their effort.[38]

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[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid.

THE JOINT UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE GROUP

The JUSMAG supported the Philippine governments during the first half of the 1950s through a multi-faceted approach that included advice to key military and government officials, both officially and otherwise, and through direct material and financial aid. Whether by purpose or default the combination of money, war surplus equipment, and good sound advice found fertile ground with Ramon Magsaysay. With the American assistance, he defeated the insurrection.

Evolution of the JUSMAG

JUSMAG-Philippines, originally called the Joint Advisory Group, was established by the JCS on 1 November 1947 to oversee a modest military assistance program under the Military Assistance Act of 1946.[39] Initially under the operational control of CINCFE, the JUSMAG worked in conjunction with U.S. economic programs and as a major participant in the total American effort that followed the war. Initially, the JUSMAG's small size, having less than twenty officers assigned until 1952, reflected American post-war philosophy of reducing U.S. military presence in the region to promote local development. The Huk insurrection prompted many changes in the JUSMAG and demonstrated shortcomings in post-war U.S.-Philippine policy. Of these failures, the greatest were misjudging the seriousness of the situation until 1950, and the importance of nationalism and land ownership to the average Filipino.[40]

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[39]Memo, Gen. Omar Bradley to Sec. Def., 2 Feb 51, sub: Semi-Annual Appraisal of the JUSMAG to the Republic of the Philippines, MMRD, RG 330, box 74, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[40]Leo S. Comish, Jr., The United States and the Philippine Hukbalahap Insurrection: 1946-54, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [8 March 1971]), p. 74; and Memo, Col. F.T.

The Department of Defense refined the JUSMAG's mission in late 1950 to reflect more closely U.S. support for the Philippine government in their growing battle against the Huk -- a battle the Philippine government was losing. At the same time, Congress passed a special act permitting the sale at cost of surplus military equipment to the Philippines. In addition, Congress allocated an undetermined amount of grant aid for the government under the Military Defense Assistance Act. The JUSMAG, then under the command of General Hobbs, became the sole source of all military assistance to the Philippines.[41] Its responsibility grew rapidly as monies and materiel arrived to support the anti-Huk campaign. For example, the Army Materiel Program, the largest of the three service accounts, nearly doubled between fiscal years 1950 and 1951 from $12.6 million to $21.8 million. All of this was made easier after 25 June 1950 when North Korean troops crossed the international boundary into South Korea and the United States entered the Korean War.[42]

Shortly thereafter, the JUSMAG increased in size to seventeen officers and twenty-one enlisted men.[43] Its mission expanded to reflect a growing concern in Washington that the ineffectiveness of the Philippine armed forces was preventing victory over the Huks, who were growing in activity and popular support during 1949 and 1950. During the summer of 1950, while

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Folk to P&A, 8 Oct 48, sub: Personnel for JUSMAG-Philippines, MMRD, RG 319, box 25, folder P&O P.I. TS, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[41]Memo, Maj. Gen. S.L. Scott to Maj. Gen. Duff, 6 Dec 50, sub: Agency to Army Outstanding MDAA Fund, MMRD, RG 330, box 74, folder 091.3 Phil., NARA, Washington, D.C.

[42]Memo, J.O. Bell to Maj. Gen. S.L. Scott, 30 Jun 51, MMRD, RG 330, box 74, folder 111 FY 50-52, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[43]Memo, CSA for JCS, 24 Oct 50, sub: Proposed Installation of a Medium Wave Transmitter, JCS 1519/51, MMRD, RG 330, box 31, folder CCS 686.9 Phil Islands, NARA, Washington, D.C.

U.S. advisors helped Magsaysay reorganize the Army into battalion combat teams (BCT), officials of the Mutual Defense Assistance Program conducted a survey of conditions in the Philippines. They found the primary problem to be political-economic instability and concluded that progress would be impossible without broad-based American assistance.[44] They were proved correct. The Huks were suppressed only after Luzon's peasant class was assisted by progressive social and economic changes that allowed them to shift their allegiance back to the central government and away from the guerrillas. Without this basic change, military operations alone could not have defeated the guerrillas, but it would require time to incorporate such a broad attack. Yet, the JUSMAG seemed to be ignoring non-military aspects of the insurrection before the MDAP report on the insurgency was published. Lansdale commented about the lack of attention even in the summer of 1950. Recalling his in-briefing at the JUSMAG, he mentioned that, "...curiously enough, Philippine and American officers barely mentioned the political and social factors in briefing me. They dwelt almost exclusively on the military situation. It was as though military affairs were the sole tangible factor they could grasp."[45]

In 1951, things began to change. Originally established by Public Law 454, the JUSMAG was reorganized when the Mutual Defense Assistance Act replaced PL 454 on 4 July 1951. The JUSMAG increased in size and became the executive agent for American military assistance to the Philippines under the general guidance of the ambassador, not the Commander-in-Chief Pacific as had previously been the case. The Chief of JUSMAG was designated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and approved by the Secretary of

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[44]Memo, J.T. Forbes to Chairman of Mission and FMACC, 27 Sep 50, sub: MDAP Organization-Philippines, MMRD, RG 330, box 74, folder 0005-333 Phil, NARA, Washington, D.C.; and Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 123.

[45]Lansdale, Midst of War, p. 19.

Defense and the government of the Philippines.[46] Although removed from MacArthur's command, the JUSMAG continued to inform his headquarters of the situation by forwarding weekly and semi-annual reports through it on the way to the Director of the Office of Military Assistance and the JCS in Washington. In August 1951, Maj. Gen. Albert Pierson replaced General Hobbs as Chief Advisor/Chief of MAAG, but not before the JCS adopted Hobbs' proposed reorganization. His proposals to increase the size of the JUSMAG with officers to advise Philippine military service and branch chiefs were incorporated in 1952.

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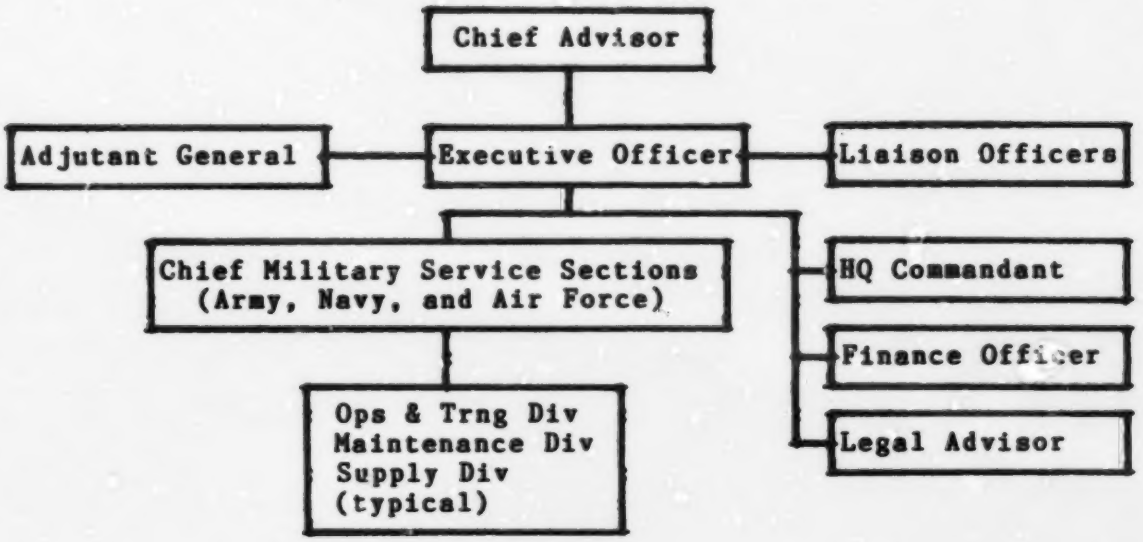
[46]Memo, F.C. Nash to Sec Def, 16 Jun 52, sub: Modifications to JUSMAG to the Philippine Directive, MMRD, RG 330, box 74, NARA, Washington, D.C.

ORGANIZATION OF JUSMAG-PHILIPPINES



Source: JUSMAG, Semi-Annual Report 1 Jun-30 Jul 52, MMRD, RG 330, box 46, NARA, Washington, D.C.

Chart 4

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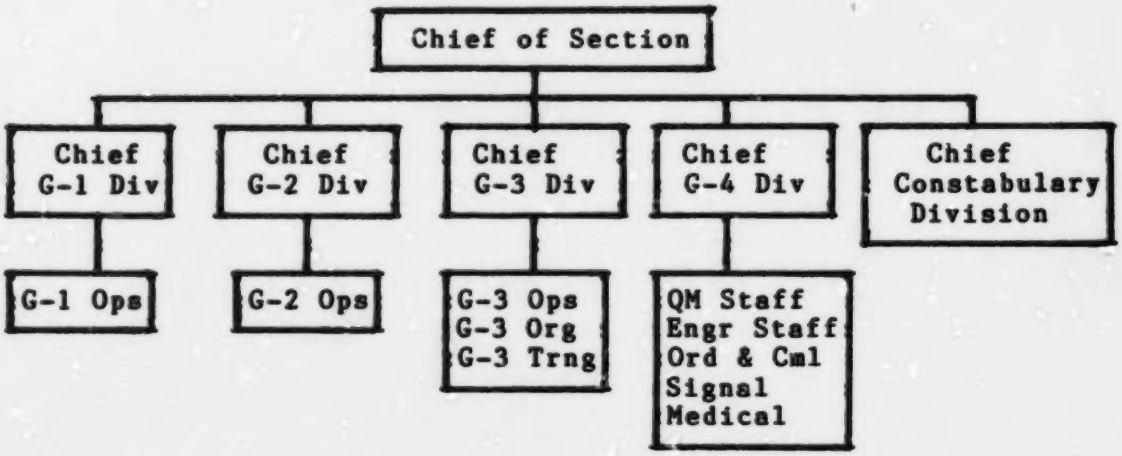
ORGANIZATION OF ARMY SECTION - JUSMAG



Source: JUSMAG, Semi-Annual Report.

Chart 5

The JCS directed that the JUSMAG be composed of a chief, and three service related division chiefs appointed by the Services. Although documentation detailing the composition of the JUSMAG officially set its strength at "such numbers as required," an earlier draft showed the JUSMAG would consist of thirty-two officers and twenty-six enlisted men, nearly double the previous strength of seventeen and twenty-one.[47] During the remainder of the campaign, the JUSMAG retained this thirty-two officer/twenty-six enlisted structure, later adding nine civilian stenographers to assist in administrative duties. In May 1953, Maj. Gen. Robert M. Cannon succeeded General Pierson as Chief Advisor.

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[47]Memo, OSD to JCS, 14 Jan 52, sub: Modification to JUSMAG to the Philippines Directive, MMRD, RG 330, box 74, folder 121, NARA, Washington, D.C.; and Note, Sec of JCS to holders of JCS 1519/44 (The Philippines), 28 Jul 50, MMRD, RG 330, box 31, folder CCS 686.9, NARA, Washington, D.C.

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The reorganized JUSMAG was given four areas of major responsibility. Under the guidance of the American ambassador, it would provide advice and assistance to key members of the military, administer the Mutual Defense Assistance Program that financed end items, help train the AFP, and promote standardization within it.

JUSMAG Support and Operations

JUSMAG requests for arms, ammunition, and vehicles rose in 1950 as Huk activity increased. Prior to this time, aid requested by JUSMAG was received, but the amounts were limited and consistently fell below the amount requested. For example, a fiscal year 1948 request for $9.4 million for food, fuel, and clothing for the Philippine military met the following response from Washington: "...it is felt very little justification exists at this time for favorable consideration. Also, it does not appear that denial of this request would seriously retard development of Philippine defense forces beyond the capability of the Philippine government to control."[48] Nearly a year later, in the fall of 1948 and despite a marked increase in Huk activity, U.S. policy remained largely unchanged. "Equipment in addition to that already furnished to the armed forces of the Philippines," wrote the War Department's Director of Plans and Operations to the Commander in Chief Far East, "can be provided only after more urgent requirements are met and after the necessary appropriations are obtained."[49] Finally, in 1950,

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[48]Msg., War Department to CINCFE, 13 Aug 47, MMRD, RG 319, box 25, folder P&O P.I. TS, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[49]Ltr., Lt. Gen. A.C. Wedemeyer to CINCFE, 11 Oct 48, sub: Defense Plans of the Philippines, MMRD, RG 319, box 25, folder P&O, NARA, Washington, D.C.

requests for additional transfers of equipment and for AFP school quotas in the United States began to reap positive results.

With the exception of heavy engineer equipment that was diverted to Korea, the Department of Defense approved most of the new requests and shipped the equipment to Manila. For example, in the three months from April to July, the Philippine armed forces received fifteen million rounds of small arms and mortar ammunition, several armored cars, light trucks, and thirty-four F-51 aircraft from Pacific and CONUS war surplus stocks.[50] At the same time, surplus cargo, training, and observation aircraft

North American P-51A Mustang

Stinson L-5 Sentinel

(C-47, T-6, and L-5) were delivered to the small Philippine Air Force. Other materials received by the JUSMAG and passed to the armed forces in 1950 included various types of small arms, machine guns, mortars, light artillery, wheeled cargo vehicles,

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[50]Memo, Maj. Gen. L.L. Lemnitzer to Sec Def, 25 Apr 50, sub: US Aid to the Philippines, MMRD, RG 330, box 74, NARA, Washington, D.C.

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and a few light and medium tanks.[51] Concurrently, JUSMAG advisors received permission from the JCS to participate in training the AFP in such vital functions as organization, tactics, logistics, and the use of the new weapons and equipment -- a decision nearly as important as the arrival of the actual equipment.[52]

Beginning in 1950, the JUSMAG supported Philippine requests for additional monetary assistance. Magsaysay first sought these special funds in a letter to Secretary of Defense Johnson in April. These funds were not for the purchase of equipment, as might be expected, but rather, were earmarked to pay the existing government troops and to allow the government to increase the number of battalion combat teams in the Philippine Army from ten to twenty-six. Throughout 1950 and well into the following year, MDAP money flowed into the Philippine Department of National Defense. These requests culminated in a special request for $10 million during the summer of 1951. Approved by President Truman, this special request seems to have put the Army over the top. Corruption began to decline, due to increased pay and the efforts of the new Secretary of National Defense; and the armed forces became more professional and effective. Soldiers, now able to purchase rations from the local villagers and provide for their families, began to feel better about their mission. This attitude change had far reaching effects for both the soldier and

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[51]During 1950, the AFP received the following items from surplus US stocks: .30 M1 and M2 carbines; .30 M1 and 1903 rifles; .30 machine guns; .50 machine guns; 60mm, 81mm, and 105mm mortars; .45 pistols; 37mm, 57mm, 40mm, 75mm guns and recoilless rifles; and 75mm and 105mm howitzers; 1/4 ton, 3/4 ton, 2 1/2 ton utility and cargo trucks; scout and armored cars; half-tracks; and light and medium M4 and M5 tanks. Memo, Leffingwell to Gen. Lemnitzer, 17 Jul 50; and Memo, Col.M.W. Brewster to Director Military Assistance, OSD, 17 Jul 50, both in MMRD, RG 330, box 74, folder 0005-333 Phil., NARA Washington, D.C.

[52]Ltr., Scott to Arthur Foye, Dec 50, MMRD, RG 330, box 74, folder 091.3, NARA, Washington, D.C.

the peasant alike. The soldier gained prestige, a sense of nationalism, and felt that he was fighting Huks to protect his country and his fellow countrymen. The peasant was relieved as the police and military finally began to protect him, and no longer used him as a handy supply house.[53] As the trend continued, so did the erosion of Huk popular support.

In the fall of 1951 the JUSMAG began to train and equip a Philippine airborne infantry company. The unit, sparked by an idea passed to Secretary Magsaysay by Lt. Col. Lansdale, was intended to be emplaced behind enemy lines to act as a mobile blocking force during large operations. Although the necessary equipment and training was provided, the airborne company was never employed as planned.[54] Concurrently, the JUSMAG funnelled large amounts of equipment into the AFP, including nearly 200 wheeled and light tracked vehicles that greatly increased their mobility and helped alleviate two long-standing deficiencies--mobility and slow response time.

It was also during 1951 that the JUSMAG embarked upon an expanded program to provide the military with professional education and training. Quotas for officers and enlisted men from all three Philippine services were obtained for military and technical schools in the United States. In 1951 alone, 249 Philippine officers and men attended 85 courses in the United States at a cost of $930,300.[55] These courses ranged from the Command and General Staff College to branch advanced and basic courses, to NCO academies, and to courses on communications, maintenance, and supply. Encompassing schools from all three

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[53]Lansdale interview.

[54]Ibid; and Memo, Col. Nyquist to Gen. Olmsted, undated, MMRD, RG 330, box 31, folder 091.3, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[55]JUSMAG, Proposed MDAP for the Republic of the Philippines FY 1951, 25 Mar 50, MMRD, RG 330, box 74, NARA, Washington, D.C.

U.S. services, the education program paid high dividends as the AFP grew in capability and professionalism.

JUSMAG efforts to increase the amount of MDAP funds were successful, aided no doubt by growing government successes against the Huks. In 1952, the Department of Defense designated $48.9 million for the Philippines to raise sixteen additional battalion combat teams. This allowed Magsaysay to achieve the twenty-six BCTs that he desired. The appropriation included a supplemental request sent to President Truman by the Secretary of Defense in February 1952, seeking an additional $5 million to be used to pay government forces and to finance a government program to purchase weapons from Huks and their supporters.[56]

By 1953, JUSMAG efforts could be judged through greater AFP effectiveness against the Huks and, to a larger extent, by overall conditions in the country. Luis Taruc saw the tide of battle changing and blamed the United States for the government's good fortunes. "He was given an American Military Advisory Group to train his armed forces," he said of Magsaysay, "to train them for war against the peasants, and he was backed up with the promise of greater aid if the people's movement got too strong for him."[57] American aid and advice were working -- working too well for some.

At this junction, an important change took place in JCS philosophy. American military advisors were permitted, for the first time, to accompany government forces into the field, a suggestion first raised by the 1950 MDAP survey mission. Prior

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[56]Memo, Col. K.R. Kreps to Sec. Army, 3 Mar 52, sub: Special Fund for the Armed Forces of the Philippines; and ltr., W.C. Foster to President Truman, 21 Feb 52, both in MMRD, RG 330, box 74, folder 091.3 and 121, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[57]Luis Taruc, Born of the People, (NY: International Publishers, 1953), p. 251.

to this time, JCS policy prohibited advisors (with only two exceptions, Lt. Col. Lansdale and his assistant, Maj. Bohannan) from taking the field with their counterparts.[58] In February 1953, JUSMAG made the first official reference to granting a few advisors permission to accompany Philippine units afield. The Country Statement FY 1954, reported that "Periodically, JUSMAG officers accompany AFP tactical units as non-combatant observers during operations in the field against dissidents. At these times, they note and report on the tactics employed and utilization (made) of MDAP equipment. By accompanying AFP units in the field from time-to-time, ... (they) are thereby better able to advise Philippine Commanders."[59] The exact number of advisors or their specific actions while accompanying Philippine Army units were not detailed.

The situation in the Philippines had reversed by 1954 and was favoring the government, now under the leadership of President Magsaysay. Relying heavily on American aid and advice from the JUSMAG, Manila was winning the battle against the insurgents and improving the economy throughout the islands. The military had been reorganized, increased in size and efficiency, and was now viewed by the peasants as a protector rather than as an oppressor. The AFP numbered some 51,000 troops, of which 37.000 were assigned to twenty-six BCTs. The remaining forces were divided between the Police Constabulary (7,300), general headquarters and special units (7,700), and combat support and service units and the small Air Force and Navy.[60] Due to

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[58]Ltr., Gen. Omar Bradley to Maj. Gen. Hobbs, 31 Aug 50; and Memo, J.T. Forbes to Chairman of Mission, both in MMRD, RG 330, box 31, folder CCS 686.9 Phil Islands, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[59]American Embassy, Manila, Country Statement, 17 Feb 53, MMRD, RG 330, box 12, folder 111 FY 50 Phil, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[60]JUSMAG, Submission of the Director of Mutual Security - FY 1954 Program, 6 Sep 54, MMRD, RG 330, box 74, folder 111 FY 53 Phil, NARA, Washington, D.C.

American aid, Magsaysay was able not only to beat the Huks, but to devote thee majority of his country's finances to social programs and land reforms. Special commu ity projects were funded that built schools, roads, and health clinics in areas long forgotten about by previous administrations. In yet another large development program, thousands of new wells were dug across Luzon and on the southern islands to provide the people with fresh, clean water. From 1951 until 1954, the Philippines received $94.9 million in non-military economic aid and assistance, assistance that enabled national spending on the military to remain below 50 percent of the total budget, even at the height of the insurrection.[61]

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[61] JUSMAG, Country Statement.

CHAPTER VI

THE INSURRECTION - PHASE II (1950-1955)

Ramon Magsaysay's appointment as Secretary of National Defense in 1950 marked the beginning of the second phase of the Huk insurrection. His appointment marked the beginning of the end of Huk supremacy and initiated the effective government offensive that crushed the rebellion during the following four years. The previous chapter discussed some of the changes Magsaysay dictated for the Philippine military and detailed new initiatives taken by the JUSMAG to support his effort. This chapter examines the military actions that took place between 1950, when President Quirino was a virtual prisoner in Malacanang, and the collapse of the insurgency in 1954/55.

AFP ORGANIZATION - PHASE II

Although the Philippine military began to reorganize before Magsaysay became the Secretary, it was during his tenure that the Philippine military matured and refined its role and function. Each of the 1,100-man battalion combat teams was organized to reflect the change in tactics from conventional, to a more unconventional mode that was based on small unit operations, mobility, and firepower at the unit level. Artillery and heavy mortar batteries were removed from the battalion and replaced with additional rifle and reconnaissance companies. When artillery was required for an operation, it was attached to the sector for use in that specific operation.[1] The following charts show the organization of the Armed Forces of the

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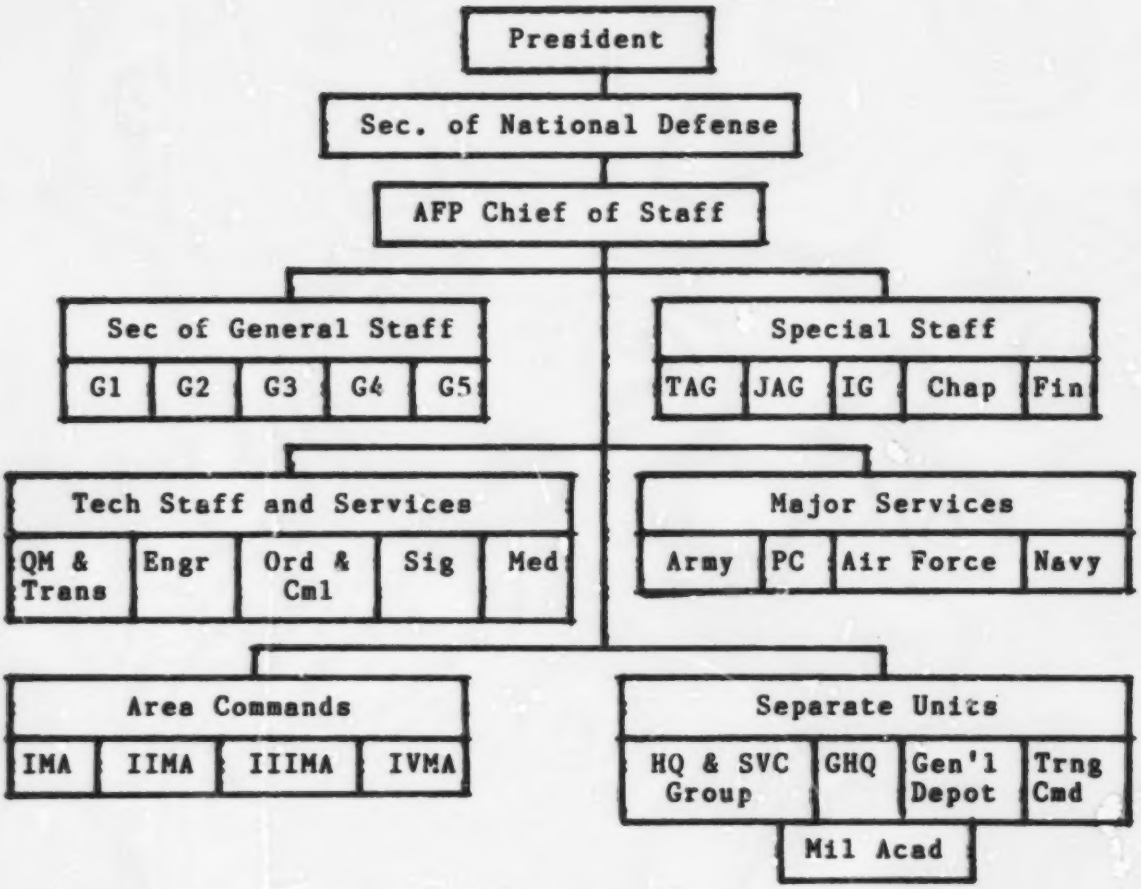
[1]Napoleon D. Valeriano and Charles T.R. Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations: The Philippine Experience, (NY: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1966), p. 133.

Philippines and of a typical Philippine Army battalion used as the basis for Magsaysay's anti-Huk campaign after 1950.

ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES ORGANIZATION
(ca. 1952)



Source: JUSMAG, Semi-Annual Report 1 Jan-30 Jun 1952, 1 Aug 52.

Chart 6

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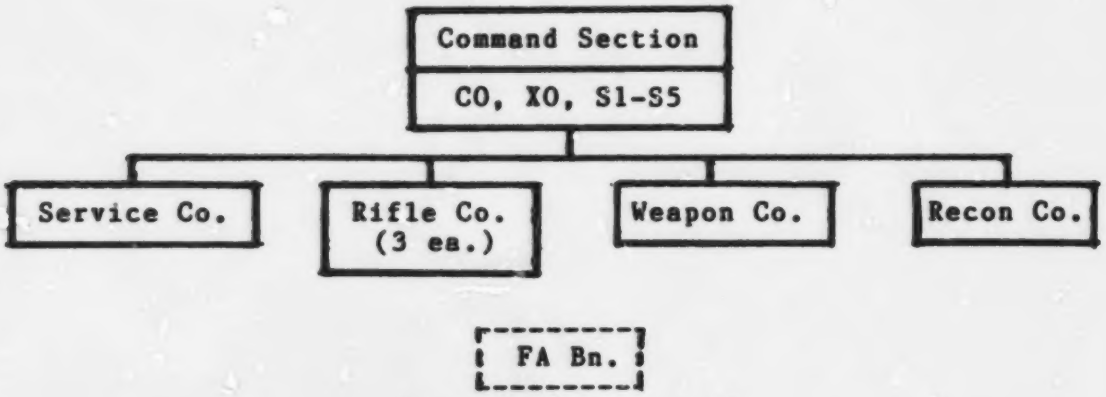
BATTALION COMBAT TEAM ORGANIZATION
(ca. 1952)



Source: Smith, Philippine Operations, p. 7.

Chart 7

The Headquarters and Service Company provided the battalion various support detachments used to augment rifle companies, coordinate support for the battalion, and in the case of the intelligence detachment, to conduct independent operations for the battalion commander or the AFP general staff. Besides the intelligence detachment, the service company also included a medical detachment; a communications platoon, capable of establishing and repairing radio or wire communication and equipment; a transportation platoon with eighteen cargo vehicles; a heavy weapons platoon with automatic weapons, 81mm mortars, and two 75mm recoilless-rifles, used to augment the weapons company; a replacement pool; and an air support detachment with light

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observation helicopters and aircraft. The aircraft, usually WWII surplus L-5 artillery observation planes, provided aerial resupply and gathered intelligence information by observation or receiving "coded" messages from agents on the ground in guerrilla territory. Helicopters were used to evacuate wounded and proved a great morale builder for soldiers on long-range missions. Although the United States provided some heavy helicopters to the Philippine military, they were noisy, slow, and not employed in large numbers during the insurgency.[2]

With the exceptions of the S-2 section and pilots from the air support detachment, Magsaysay discontinued the old practice of leaving a battalion in one area for extended periods. Instead, he ordered them moved periodically, leaving only the Intelligence Service Team and the pilots in the old location to assist the new, incoming unit.[3] The Army found this allowed them the greatest flexibility to work closely with local police and constabulary units, while avoiding ill-feelings with the local populace. Within a BCT's defined area, companies or other smaller units were deployed to conduct independent operations, or the entire battalion could join quickly with others into larger formations when needed.

Each company consisted of approximately 200 men and was divided into four infantry platoons; a service platoon with intelligence, maintenance, civil affairs, and medical sections; and a small company headquarters. Additional transportation assets and heavier armaments were transferred from company and battalion level, and placed directly within the individual platoons. Each platoon was assigned four light utility vehicles,

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[2]Ibid., pp. 132 and 257-266.

[3]Reginald J. Swarbrick, The Evolution of Communist Insurgency in the Philippines, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, [7 June 1983]), p. 33.

one 2 1/2 ton truck, radios, two .50 caliber machine guns, and one 60mm mortar. Combat platoons were made up of three squads, each squad capable of fielding two patrols. Typically, a combat patrol had an enlisted patrol leader, a radioman, a Browning Automatic Rifle man, a scout, a rifleman/grenadier, and an aidman/cook.[4]

AFP TACTICS

Beginning in 1950, AFP tactics underwent dramatic changes in both style and in combining purely military actions with psychological warfare activities. By combining the two, Magsaysay hoped to maintain pressure on the Huks, cause dissension within guerrilla ranks, and influence the people to favor the government. Patrols that once stayed close to home and usually near major roads became more effective as new, more aggressive leaders took command of BCTs. Patrolling was conducted on an irregular time-frame and a patrol often remained in the field for several days before returning to garrison. This in itself was a major change from the pre-Magsaysay days when patrols always returned home before nightfall. Instead of remaining road-bound, patrols ventured deep into the jungle in search of Huk camps and to gather information.[5]

BCT commanders relied on Scout-Rangers for long-range patrols that exceeded more than a few days in length. Five man teams were assigned to each battalion and often penetrated deep into guerrilla territory for several weeks at a time. One of

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[4]Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 68.

[5]Irwin D. Smith, The Philippine Operations Against the Huks: Do Lessons Learned Have Application Today?, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [24 January 1968]), pp. 1 and 8.

their favorite methods of gaining information was to enlist the help of local minorities, who themselves were often victimized by Huk bands. Capitalizing on this ready-made animosity toward the Huks, the government often enlisted the assistance of Negritos, black pygmies who lived in Luzon's mountains, to gather intelligence or to act as guides for the Army.[6]

Magsaysay was also quick to implement novel methods of attacking Huk logistics and supply. About half of the money he received from the United States after his 1950 visit went toward the purchase of "loose" weapons. His "Cash for Guns" campaign was so successful during its five year lifetime that it is estimated to have reduced Huk weapon stores by up to 50 percent.[7] The remainder went to build the Philippine military. By the end of 1950, Philippine Army strength rose to almost 30,000 troops, nearly double its size of a year before. In addition to battalion combat teams, Army force structure contained a K-9 Corps (used occasionally to track Huks), a battalion of Scout-Rangers, and a horse cavalry squadron.[8]

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE OPERATIONS

Long-range government patrols were also used to assist the government's psychological warfare program that was in full gear

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[6]Charles T.R. Bohannan, "Unconventional Warfare," in Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines 1946-53, (Ft. Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Forces Center and School, [1961]), p. 61.

[7]Donald MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations in the Philippines, (carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [26 March 1956]), p. 23.

[8]Clarence G. Barrens, I Promise: Magsaysay's Unique PSYOP "Defeats" HUKS, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, [1970]), p. 41.

by 1951. The "Force X" idea was reborn by Col. Valeriano, now the commander of the 7th BCT, and psychological warfare officers, who reported directly to the Secretary of National Defense staff, were attached to each Army battalion. Scout-Ranger units within each battalion often adopted "Force X" tactics and ambushed enemy patrols and planted "dirty tricks" in Huk weapon caches. In addition, they were used covertly to distribute propaganda leaflets in areas thought secure by local guerrillas. The most successful of these leaflets was "The Eye." When a Huk found one of these simple leaflets, he was shaken at the thought of his secure territory being violated by some unseen enemy.[9] Another AFP favorite, originally used against the Moros, involved planting altered ammunition in enemy ammunition stockpiles. This modified ammunition contained dynamite in place of powder and exploded when it was fired. Besides destroying a weapon and injuring the man firing it, it sent chills of mistrust through the Huk ranks. Who could be sure that the cartridge he was about to fire had not been tampered with and, who was to blame? Was it planted into one of their secure depots or, was their supplier a government agent? They never could really be sure.[10]

The "Eye" Leaflet

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[9]A.H. Peterson, G.C. Reinhardt, and E.E. Conger, eds. Symposium on the Role of Airpower in Counterinsurgency and Unconventional Warfare: The Philippine HUK Campaign, (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, [July 1963]), p. 50.

[10]Valeriano and Bohannan, p. Counter-Guerrilla Operations, 136.

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The Philippine Army's research and development unit, known affectionately as "The Department of Dirty Tricks" developed several other interesting items. Some of these involved exploding radios, flashlights, and doctored Huk weapons that were then secretly replaced into enemy stockpiles. Another of the inventions developed by the head of the R&D unit, whom Bohannan called "...the nicest man that I have ever known and with one of the nastiest minds," was a modified M1 carbine for use by Scout-Rangers. This weapon was equipped with dual barrels, made fully automatic, and was capable of firing 1,500 rounds per minute. They were greatly favored by the patrols who needed the firepower but not the weight of conventional weapons for their long excursions into Huklandia. Finally, the AFP produced a homemade napalm bomb that was dropped from L-5 light observation aircraft. These napalm bombs were made by filling coconut shells with gasoline and dropping them along with a couple of incendiary grenades on suspected Huk locations.[11]

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[11]The U.S. refused to sell napalm munitions to the Philippines. Bohannan, "Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," p. 50.

Initial success with infiltration tactics prompted the government to experiment with expanding into large-scale infiltrations. Company C of the 7th BCT was selected for this project and moved to a secret training site in the Sierra Madre mountains. After eight weeks of intense training in all varieties of special operations and in impersonating the insurgents, four teams were dispatched on OPERATION COVER-UP. The teams moved into the area around the village of Pandi and settled into the local community as farmers and laborers. From their base in a house rented by the unit S-2, they reported on guerrilla activities, ambushed several Huk patrols, and carried out a number of "snatch" operations against local Huk officials. Before the operation ended, seventy Huk officials disappeared and almost all guerrilla activities in the area were documented. This one action literally took Pandi away from the Huks as an operational base.[12]

As the government realized benefits from promoting dissension and mistrust in the Huk organization, it increased its efforts in 1952. Rewards were paid for information leading to the capture of guerrilla leaders and were given wide publicity. Local officials known to sympathize with the Huk were often put

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[12]Ibid., pp. 67-69; and Napoleon D. Valeriano (Colonel, AFP), "Military Operations," in Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines 1946-53, (Ft. Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Forces Center and School, [15 June 1961]), p. 32.

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into such compromising positions that they volunteered information in exchange for safe-conduct out of the area. In one instance, a local mayor was called into a village square and amidst great pomp and fanfare was thanked by Col. Valeriano for helping his troops kill a courier. Although totally unaware of the circumstances surrounding the courier's death, the mayor and his family appeared on the colonel's doorstep at 0300hrs the following morning. In exchange for information, the government resettled the mayor and his family to another island.[13]

In another example of psychological warfare, this time aimed at Huk cohesion, Magsaysay authorized a bounty of $50,000 for Luis Taruc. This was followed immediately by a more surprising move. He authorized even larger rewards for some Huk lieutenants and less important leaders. His plan worked. Jealousy sprang up between different groups whose members were upset that their leader's "price" was less than other leader's. However juvenile the effect, the reward program succeeded in disrupting guerrilla organization and did in fact lead to the capture of several Huk leaders.[14]

One enterprising BCT on Manila's outskirts managed to borrow several panel trucks from a local business and began making daily deliveries around the city. Early one morning, one of the trucks (with a fully armed squad concealed in its cargo compartment) was stopped by a Huk foraging party on a lonely country road and demanded the driver give them what he had in the back of his truck. This, he did graciously. The dead insurgents were left where they fell by the road and, after similar incidents happened

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[13]Bohannan, "Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," p. 61.

[14]William O. Douglas, North from Malaya: Adventure on Five Fronts, (NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1953), p. 120.

around Manila's suburbs, hijackings of civilian vehicles almost came to a complete stop.[15]

In another episode, a plane flew over a small battle and called down to the surprised Huks below by name. As the pilot departed, he thanked several "informers" on the ground and wished them good luck in escaping injury as a result of helping the Army find their unit. The Huks stared at one another, especially those whose names were called out, and wondered how much of what they had just heard was true. Could their comrades be informers? They just couldn't be sure, and as the tide of battle turned against them, several mock trials were held and more than one innocent guerrilla was put before a convenient wall.[16] Those who watched the execution must surely have prayed that the next plane to fly over them didn't have a list with their names on it.

Late in the campaign, government L-5 aircraft dropped two series of leaflets on Huk forces trapped without food on Mount Arayat. The first set, addressed to the group's leaders, promised a choice of safe conduct if they surrendered, or death by starvation if they continued to resist. The second set of leaflets were addressed to the troops and promised them fair trials and just treatment, including food, if they surrendered. Magsaysay's object was to make the troops believe their leaders no longer cared about what happened to them and that they were willing to sacrifice them for a lost cause. In this case, the plan worked, at least partially. About half of the surrounded guerrillas surrendered, while others attempted to break-out of

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[15]Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 153.

[16]Peterson, et al., Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 50.

the government lines. Even though some escaped, their confidence in their leaders suffered.[17]

AFP INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS

Secretary Magsaysay realized that intelligence was the key that could reverse the course of the insurrection. Without knowing where the Huks were, in what strength, and what their plans were, no amount of military reorganization or change in tactics would prove effective. Using Lansdale's practical advice, he made Huk order-of-battle the first concern of his intelligence officers. Commanders were told to study Huk organization in their areas and to compile complete information files on known or suspected members of the movement. Each battalion started a special intelligence file on 3x5 index cards on all of these people. The files contained information about specific people, about local Huk intelligence and logistic nets, and other information obtained by Scout-Ranger patrols. When the BCT was transferred to a new area, the card file, and the S-2 Intelligence Section, remained in the area to help the incoming BCT.[18] Periodically, these files were collected and their information consolidated at AFP GHQ.

Magsaysay presented his commanders with two sets of basic questions that were essential to the campaign. First, what can the enemy do to hurt me, what does he intend to do, and when will he do it? The second question was where is the enemy, what are his strengths that should be avoided, and what are his weaknesses

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[17]Luis A. Villa-Real, "Huk Hunting," Army Combat Forces Journal V (November 1954), p. 35.

[18]Peterson, et al., Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 29; and Valeriano, "Military Operations," p. 32.

that should be exploited?[19] As this information was compiled, other related data came to light -- the Huk communication system and the location of local supply points and logistic drop-points were discovered. The information about order-of-battle became so complete by 1954 that Lansdale remarked that if the guerrillas wanted to know where any of their units were, all they needed do was ask AFP intelligence.[20]

"Force X's" rebirth was a direct result of this emphasis on intelligence. During this second phase of the insurrection, "Force X" operations supplied the government with both intelligence and erased Huk feelings of security even in their traditional strongholds around Mount Arayat, the Candaba Swamp, or in the Sierra Madre mountains. Realizing large-scale infiltration did not come easily for the military, Magsaysay required his commanders to devote more and more of their assets to its use. Much of the program's success can be credited to the work of the Philippine Intelligence Service and graduates from the intelligence school, both organizations revitalized through the efforts of Secretary Magsaysay and his personal advisor, Edward Lansdale. Intelligence school graduates were placed at all levels within the Army, the Constabulary, and the National Bureau of Investigation.[21] Soldiers were screened and trained, cover stories developed, and when conditions favored "Force X", they were employed. These conditions usually involved the temporary disruption of Huk communications in an area or a successful operation that destroyed a Huk unit and its leaders.

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[19]Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 45.

[20]Valeriano, "Military Operations," p. 32; and Interview with Lansdale.

[21]JUSMAG, Semi-Annual Report, July - December 1951, 15 Jan 52, MMRD, RG 334, box 6, NARA, Washington, D.C.; and Interview with Lansdale.

But above all, "Force X" relied on secrecy in planning, training, and execution.[22]

On the island of Panay, the Philippine Army tried a variation of the "Force X" concept to break the local guerrilla structure. Accompanied by three military intelligence agents, a group of twenty former Huks were infiltrated into the island's interior. After three months of gathering information, establishing their cover as a bona fide Huk unit, and gaining the confidence of the island's Huk leadership, they hosted a "by invitation only" barbecue for the Panay High Command.[23] Between the ribs and potato salad, the covert government force sprang an ambush that killed or captured nearly all the Panay commanders and crippled the organization on the island for the duration of the campaign.

Magsaysay also resorted to planting spies within the Huk ranks to gain first-hand information. Employing the tightest of security, Magsaysay located a willing villager who was the cousin of a local Huk commander. The commander had joined the movement for personal rather than ideological reasons and was considered as the operation's target. After two months of training, Magsaysay's plan was put into action. Government troops burned the man's house, his brother was imprisoned, and his parents secretly moved to another island. With this as his cover, he sought refuge with his cousin, the guerrilla, and joined the movement. The local squadron made him a National Finance Committee collector and with money supplied to him by the government, he was soon promoted and in a short time became one of Luis Taruc's personal bodyguards. Before this project was terminated and the informer ordered to escape to friendly lines, he supplied the government with the names of the 1,175 member

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[22]Valeriano, "Military Operations," p. 33.

[23]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 123.

Finance Committee, and information about the entire Huk operation in Candaba Swamp.[24]

The government also relied on information obtained from captured Huks and their friends and families. Direct intelligence came from the guerrilla or his immediate family. Although the amount of information received directly from these people was limited, when it was tendered, it was usually accurate and timely. The government tried to interrogate a captured Huk as soon after his capture as possible. By doing this, intelligence officers hoped to take full advantage of confusion and depression that normally accompanies capture. Once the man was convinced that he was going to be treated fairly and not tortured or summarily executed, he sometimes cooperated.

More information was gathered by using an indirect method that targeted friends, classmates, and more distant family members such as cousins, uncles, aunts, etc. While the guerrilla remained at large, these people were reluctant to divulge information but, once the guerrilla relative was captured, family members often volunteered information to help their friend or relative. To supplement this program, the government also planted agents in Manila prisons and questioned criminals about Huk activities. Since Huks sometimes employed common criminals to assist them with robberies and kidnappings, especially during the movement's decline, this tactic proved most helpful. Criminals frequently knew about Huk organization and were likely to exchange this information for reductions in sentences or improved living conditions.[25]

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[24]Medardo Justiniano (Maj., AFP), "Combat Intelligence" in Counter-Guerrilla Operations, pp. 44-46.

[25]Ibid., p. 42.

The Philippine Army was not beyond staging well planned production numbers to get information from hard-core Huk supporters. In San Luis, Luis Taruc's hometown, a local guerrilla unit killed four policemen and left the dismembered bodies scattered on a highway. In response, an AFP company surrounded the village, marshalled the villagers into the town square and proceeded to march them at gunpoint to a nearby riverbank. Across the river stood a squad of troops and twelve bound and hooded "Huks." One by one the soldiers bayonetted and shot the "Huk" prisoners while those awaiting execution shouted out names of local supporters amidst their cries for mercy. When the last "Huk" was killed, the people were marched back to the village and individually questioned by MIS officers. Out of fear, and probably more than a little shock, many of those named by the executed guerrillas began to spew forth information about local guerrilla activities, food and weapon caches, and anything else they could think of. The information broke the Huk hold over the village and hurt the movement throughout the region. Alas, what the villagers failed to see while they were being questioned was the scene at the execution site. As soon as the villagers left the riverbank, the executed "Huks" arose from the dead, went into the jungle, washed the animal blood from their clothing, and rejoined their units.[26] It had been a grand show, and it worked.

Together with other programs geared to gather information and influence the people, Magsaysay's intelligence campaign was a resounding success. By the end of the campaign in 1955, Luzon was flooded with informants, posters offering rewards for Huks still at large, and government troops carried out large covert operations throughout the region once known as Huklandia. The well organized and coordinated program gave the Army the information it needed to strike the Huks where they were most

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[26]Ibid., p. 47.

vulnerable and gradually severed the guerrillas from their food, arms, and most importantly, from the people.[27]

MILITARY OPERATIONS - PHASE II

On the day he was sworn into office as Secretary of National Defense, Magsaysay received an anonymous phone call from a man who wished to talk to him about the insurgent movement. An hour after the call, Magsaysay met Tarciano Rizal on a deserted back street in one of Manila's barrios. (Rizal was the grandson of Jose Rizal, a national folk hero and freedom fighter from the 1896 rebellion.) As proved the case with other would be assassins, Rizal came to Manila to kill Magsaysay but heard so many glowing reports about the Secretary that he decided to meet him first. For several days the two men discussed the Huk movement, its roots, its goals, and what Magsaysay wanted to do for the Philippines. When their talks concluded, Rizal was convinced of Magsaysay's sincerity and offered to help him. He took the Secretary to his Manila apartment from which the two watched a local lady leave two baskets of food for CPP Politburo members.[28] When Magsaysay returned to his office and told the chief of Philippine intelligence what he had seen, he was informed of the ongoing government operation to try to keep track of this CPP group.

On 18 October 1950, using information compiled by Army Intelligence and from observations of the "basket lady," twenty-two simultaneous raids were launched on Politburo members and their meeting places. The raids totally disrupted the Politburo and prompted Magsaysay to get President Quirino to issue a

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[27]MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations, p. 22; and Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 153.

[28]Douglas, North From Malaya, p. 111.

presidential proclamation suspending the writ of habeas corpus for the duration of the anti-Huk campaign. This step allowed the government to hold captured guerrillas longer than twenty-four hours without prima facie evidence. Magsaysay could now hold Huks for extended periods while the government built judicial cases against them. Before the writ was suspended, it was not at all unusual for a captured Huk to be back with his unit within two days from the time he was taken into custody.[29]

The Manila raids spawned a rash of Huk retaliation. Having a strength of some 12,000 armed fighters and another 100,000 active supporters in Luzon, the Huks renewed their campaign of raids, holdups, kidnappings, and intimidation.[30] In Binan, Huks robbed the local bank of $76,000. Another Huk squadron attacked the village of San Marcelino and burned thirty-six homes, kidnapped ten people, and murdered seventy-two others before leaving. In Zambales, fifty guerrillas attacked the PC garrison at Palawig and killed two policemen and captured twenty-one rifles before being driven off.[31]

However, in its enthusiasm one squadron went too far. On 25 November, one hundred Huks attacked the small village of Aglao and massacred nearly the entire population. As word of this atrocity spread, people throughout central Luzon became outraged. There were no government troops in Aglao and the villagers had done nothing to anger the Huks. When Taruc heard of the

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[29]Ismael Lapus (Col., AFP), "The Communist Huk Enemy," in Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 22; and Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 68.

[30]Special Operations Research Office, Peak Organized Strength of Guerrillas and Government Forces in Algeria, Nagaland, Ireland, Indonesia, South Vietnam, Malaya, Philippines, and Greece, (Washington, D.C.: The American University, [1965]), p. 16.

[31]Lapus, "The Communist Huk Enemy," p. 21.

massacre, he recalled the unit's commander, tried him by court martial, and sentenced him to confinement and hard labor. But Taruc's efforts to appease popular discontent came too late. The damage was done and the entire Huk organization suffered the consequences.[32]

The government responded to the new offensive and the Aglao massacre with an early 1951 offensive of its own. In January, Army units struck Huk locations near Mount Arayat and Mount Dorst that they had learned of from information gathered in the October Manila raid. OPERATION SABER, as this action was called, ended in February about the time the EDCOR program was formally launched. SABER demonstrated the military's new resolve to pursue the Huks into their strongholds, and showed that the government would no longer be satisfied with simply responding to guerrilla attacks but, would initiate operations when and where it desired.[33]

At the same time, the AFP began to disrupt Huk supply lines between villages and their jungle hideouts. Using information collected through infiltration, informants, and from aerial reconnaissance, government troops tried to separate Huks from their food and popular base. Meanwhile, L-5 flights were used to locate "production bases" that Taruc started during the previous couple of years. When one of these farms was located, it was either attacked directly or was kept under aerial surveillance until just before harvest time. Then, when government agricultural consultants thought harvest was imminent, the farm would be raided and destroyed.[34] This procedure proved most effective. It kept guerrilla forces occupied guarding and

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[32]Rodney S. Azama, The Huks and the New People's Army: Comparing Two Postwar Filipino Insurgencies, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, [26 April 1985]), p. 148.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 134.

working the "bases," only to have them destroyed just before they could harvest the crops. This not only cut deeply into Huk food supplies, but hurt morale as well.

Magsaysay continued to integrate the military into his civil affairs and psychological warfare campaigns throughout 1951. In the small hamlet of San Augustin, population fifty, the local Huk leader's wife was preparing to have her first child. Knowing that the hamlet lacked medical facilities, Magsaysay ordered the local battalion commander to send a five-man surveillance team to the village and to report when she delivered the baby. When the child was born, Magsaysay dispatched an Army ambulance, doctor, and nurse to help the woman. While the ambulance was en route, an AFP helicopter flew over the hamlet and told the surprised villagers that medical help was on the way for their newest citizen. When the ambulance arrived, siren blaring, it was met by cheering townspeople. Later, the new mother sent her thanks to the Secretary and apologized for her husband being a guerrilla. Shortly thereafter, the guerrilla peaceably surrendered with his entire unit to the area BCT commander.[35]

By the close of 1951, Army strength increased by nearly 60 percent over the preceding year to stand at twenty-six 1,047-man BCTs. In addition to the BCTs, one of which served in Korea, an airborne infantry battalion was activated in October, an engineer construction group with three construction companies was formed, and the Police Constabulary increased to ninety-one companies. The entire Department of National Defense had been successfully reorganized for internal defense. With a combined strength of over 53,700 men, the Philippine armed forces were beginning to make steady progress against the guerrillas. Professionalism and competence were improving in both officer and enlisted ranks and,

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[35]JUSMAG, Semi-Annual Report, 1 July - 30 December 1951, 11 Jan 52, MMRD, RG 334, box 6, NARA, Washington, D.C.; and Valeriano and Bohannan, Counter-Guerrilla Operations, p. 155.

during 1951, two hundred-sixty top graduates from Philippine military schools attended training courses in the United States. Another significant addition was made to the Philippine Air Force -- they received fifty F-51 Mustang fighters to improve their ground support mission.[36]

The 1951 Elections

The 1951 off-year election played an important role in fighting the guerrillas and demonstrated increased public confidence in the Philippine military and the changing complexion of the insurgency. Magsaysay promised the nation an honest election and was determined to keep his word. Remembering the violent 1949 election that bolstered Huk propaganda, Magsaysay mobilized the military to guarantee the November election would take place in a more peaceful atmosphere.

Despite several Huk attempts to disrupt campaigning, and occasional political violence between the major parties in Manila, overwhelming military presence during the campaign and at the polls produced a surprisingly quiet election. Magsaysay activated the Philippine Army Reserve and mobilized ROTC cadets to secure the polls and ensure that ballot boxes arrived safely, and untampered with, at tally centers. In addition, Maj. Gen. Robert Cannon, then Chief of the JUSMAG, assigned twenty-five of his officers to poll-watching duties.[37]

Four million Filipinos cast ballots and only twenty-one people lost their lives during the election. This compared most favorably to the 1949 election during which several hundred Filipinos were killed. Aside from the lack of violence, the

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[36]JUSMAG, Semi-Annual Report Jul-Dec 51.

[37]Barrens, I Promise, p. 56.

major surprise was that Quirino's Liberal Party lost considerable ground to the opposition Nacionalistas who carried every contested congressional seat and won control of the Philippine Senate.[38] The people distrusted Quirino and felt that the only reason he allowed some reforms was to stop the Huks, not to help them. Magsaysay on the other hand, who refused to campaign for Quirino's Liberals, was seen as acting to help the people by stopping the insurgents. His popularity grew from both his success against the Huks and from delivering the honest, peaceful election he promised the people.[39] Beginning that December, Huk surrenders increased, the number of active squadrons declined, and the combined government intelligence programs and PSYOP operations continued to erode guerrilla solidarity.

In 1952, AFP GHQ established a Public Affairs Office for Psychological Warfare and Public Relations. With considerable assistance from the U.S.Information Service, well equipped teams were assigned to areas where they conducted efficient public relations programs to gain the people's support for the government. Using pamphlets, posters, and public address systems, the teams held public rallies that were generally well received. Because the teams lived with the people and helped them construct schools and other public facilities, they became well liked and their influence grew accordingly. By the end of 1953, these public relations teams often found themselves in the middle of surrender negotiations, acting as go-betweens for the government and the guerrilla forces.[40]

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[38]Edwin J. McCarren, Personal Leadership: An Element of National Power, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [8 April 1966]), p. 30.

[39]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 111.

[40]MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations, p. 25.

A second program directly aimed at influencing the villagers also began in 1952. Army commanders were encouraged to set up Civilian Commando Units in friendly areas susceptible to Huk raids. Composed entirely of local volunteers, and led by Army NCOs, the volunteer units protected their barrios and thus relieved government forces from these stationary duties. By allowing the villagers to protect themselves, the program grew to include some 10,000 people by the end of the campaign in 1955.[41]

By the spring of 1952, the AFP was taking the initiative away from the Huks. Once again forced to fight as semi-autonomous bands, Huks no longer enjoyed the luxury of well-organized squadrons under Taruc's central control and guidance. Government intelligence continued to improve and provided GHQ with accurate and timely information about Huk strength and location. Huk casualties during the first few months of the year increased 12 percent, while AFP casualties declined by 23 percent. Training and education of officers and enlisted men began to pay benefits in professionalism and competence. As a result of the new professionalism and the success of village commando units in securing many local hamlets, fewer Army forces were required for static defense, thus allowing a larger proportion of government troops to undertake active pursuit operations. By year's end, the Army stood at 36,400 men and had a new M-4 medium tank platoon that was activated in May.[42]

On 11 April 1952, government forces raided Recco 1 headquarters in Nueva Ecija Province, capturing the Recco

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[41]Ibid.

[42]JUSMAG, Semi-Annual Report, 1 January - 30 June 1952, 1 Aug 52; and Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, pp. 121-122.

commander, William Pomeroy.[43] During the summer, the government conducted a two-day operation near Mount Arayat that demonstrated the increased effectiveness of the entire Philippine Armed Forces. Although the operation netted few guerrillas, it was the first major effort wherein the Philippine Air Force actively supported a ground operation with air cover. P-51 fighters flew air support for the BCT for the entire time the force was in the field. Response time was reduced to less than twenty minutes and the two forces cooperated to their fullest -- due in no small measure to the fact that the Air Force commander was the son of the BCT commander on the ground. This cooperation, based as it was on familiarity and a singular goal, continued to grow throughout the remainder of the campaign.[44]

In August 1952, the 7th and 16th BCT mounted an offensive against guerrillas in Zambales Province. Supported on the west and south by other Army units, the 7th BCT moved into the mountains while the 16th BCT formed a blocking position around the perimeter. For seventy-two days the BCT searched the area for Huk camps and received daily resupply from L-5 aircraft whose pilots, lacking adequate parachutes, dropped supplies encased in woven rattan spheres. When the operation concluded in October, seventy-two of the estimated two hundred Huks in the area were captured or killed, and numerous enemy ordnance shops and caches were destroyed. As the battalion withdrew, it left behind platoon-sized units to continue the search. Although small, these stay-behind units were armed exceptionally well. Each unit had at least two automatic rifles, four sub-machine guns, a radio, and the ever present camera. This operation, along with other similar ones conducted throughout Huklandia, produced a Huk

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[43]Pomeroy later wrote of his Huk experience in The Forest. New York: International Publishers, 1963. This volume provides an interesting view of the insurrection and its causes from the guerrilla standpoint.

[44]Peterson, et al., Symposium on the Role of Airpower, p. 26.

offer for a truce just before Christmas. Unfortunately, the government agreed to withdraw its forces during the negotiations and, when the talks broke down after New Year's, the Huks recovered somewhat from the government's fall offensive. Despite this reprieve, the Huk force had lost nearly 13,000 members to combat action or surrender since the day Magsaysay took office in 1950.[45]

Philippine military success continued throughout the following year. 1953 was marked by a major April offensive and the November elections. In early April, a captured guerrilla told 17th BCT officers where the main Huk headquarters was located near Mount Arayat. On 10 April, the battalion attacked the location while three companies of the 22d BCT held the north and east slopes of the mountain. Unfortunately, the camp was deserted, but rather than abandon the operation, the government force pressed its advance. Moving from area to area, discovering many smaller camps as they went, troops searched for the main enemy concentration. While they searched, two more battalions reinforced the perimeter around Mount Arayat.

On 24 April, the 17th BCT and two additional rifle companies attacked the barrio of Buena Vista on the mountain's western slope. Although they managed to engage a number of Huks, most of the leaders escaped through the perimeter five days later.[46] Again, the number of enemy casualties failed to tell the whole story of the offensive. The Army's real success came from doggedly pursuing the guerrillas through the very center of their former bastion. For even the most optimistic Huk, this meant the government now had relatively free access to any part of Luzon. The idea of an impenetrable Huk fortress was dashed and the

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[45]Villa-Real, "Huk Hunting," p. 33; and Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 119.

[46]Villa-Real, "Huk Hunting," pp. 34-35.

remaining 2,300 guerrillas were forced to move constantly to avoid the persistent government troops.[47]

The 1953 General Election

1953 was the year the Philippines was scheduled to have its next presidential election and, other than the military situation with the insurgents, little had changed in Manila. The Quirino administration was still corrupt and made no attempts to clean its house or improve the people's plight in ways not directly connected to the insurrection. Early that year, Magsaysay was again approached by several Filipino statesmen who were planning a coup d'etat to avoid what they suspected would be a bloody election in November. True to his nature, Magsaysay responded to their advance as he had done in 1950.

> I know that it is true, as you say, that I can seize the government, should we try. There is no doubt about it in my mind. I should like to point out, however, that if we do this thing it will make us into a banana republic. It would be a precedent we would regret if we allow our young democracy to set out on such a dangerous undertaking ... Let us work together to insure a clean election. If all else fails, and we have not tried all else yet, then, let us discuss the problem again.[48]

On the last day of February, Magsaysay resigned his position as Secretary of National Defense on the pretext of irreconcilable differences with President Quirino, but in reality, his resignation paved the way for his running for the presidency on the Nacionalista party ticket. In his letter of resignation, Magsaysay set the tone for the campaign: "...It would be futile

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[47]Report, JUSMAG to CINCPAC, "Monthly Summary of Activities for April," 9 May 53, MMRD, RG 334, box 8, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[48]Carlos P. Romulo and Marvin M. Gran, The Magsaysay Story, (NY: Van Rees Press, 1956), p. 192.

to go on killing Huk while the administration continues to breed dissidence by neglecting the problems of our masses."[49] Thus, began his run for the presidency. During the next nine months, while his hand-picked senior Army officers continued to take the fight to the Huks, Magsaysay visited 1,100 barrios and spoke for more than 3,000 hours on issues close to the hearts of his countrymen -- corruption, neglect, poverty, and land reform.[50]

On 10 November, more than four million voters cast ballots in another relatively quiet and clean election. As was the case in 1951, the military guarded the polls, ensured the integrity of ballot boxes, and prevented political thugs, or the remaining 2,000 Huks, from intimidating voters. When the ballots were counted, Magsaysay won the presidency by the largest popular margin in Philippine history -- 2.9 million to 1.3 million for Quirino. Six weeks later, on 30 December 1953, Ramon Magsaysay was inaugurated in a most unorthodox ceremony. Instead of the traditional tuxedo and tails, he wore an open shirt and slacks that were shortly thereafter torn from his body by an overly enthusiastic crowd of supporters. That night, five thousand people attended a state dinner to honor the new President and cleaned-out the kitchen completely, but Magsaysay loved every minute of it all.[51]

As president Magsaysay continued his practice of traveling and speaking with the people both while on the road and at his home in Manila. Each morning, people formed outside his home to discuss problems or suggestions they had with the president while he ate his breakfast. Magsaysay seemed everywhere at once--

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[49]McCarren, Personal Leadership, p. 32.

[50]Leonard S. Kenworth, Leaders of New Nations, (NY: Doubleday and Company, 1959), p. 210.

[51]Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 113; and Barrens, I Promise, p. 60.

with troops on campaign, checking local officials, and talking with the people. It was on one of these trips aboard his C-47, The Mount Pinatubo, that he died at age forty-one in a crash on Cebu on 17 March 1957.[52]

Final Anti-Huk Military Operations

After assuming the presidency, Magsaysay was able to concentrate on civil relief operations and he devoted less of his time to purely military matters. During his first year in office, he dramatically reduced the amount of corruption in government and instituted many social and agrarian reforms. A quarter of a million hectares of public land were distributed to almost 3,000 farmers and two EDCOR projects on Mindinao flourished. EDCOR was by now so popular that several peasants admitted to joining the Huk movement simply as a means to participate in EDCOR when they turned around and surrendered to government forces. Outside of EDCOR project sites irrigation projects were started, 400 kilometers of new roads were constructed, and another 500 kilometers of existing roads were repaired and improved.

Late in 1953, the Philippine Congress passed the Elementary Education Act of 1953. This act, that received acclaim across the nation, called for free, compulsory elementary education, and provided seven years of intermediate and secondary education. During the following year, 1954, the government founded the Liberty Wells Association. Funded heavily by American aid, this organization supervised the digging of more than two thousand sanitary water wells in villages across Luzon and on larger

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[52]Barrens, I Promise, p. 63.

islands to the south.[53] While his administration took action to improve the people's lives through these programs, Magsaysay continued to supervise the anti-Huk campaign by serving as his own Secretary of National Defense.

As 1954 began, Huks no longer presented a serious threat to the central government. They numbered less than 2,000 active guerrillas and their popular support base was all but dried up. Under these severe restrictions they were forced to limit operations to small raids aimed primarily at getting food and supplies, and they increasingly turned to simple banditry. In essence, the Huks were reduced in status to the level that the United States and the Philippine governments alloted to them before 1950.

In February, the Army began its largest anti-Huk operation to date in an area bounded by Mounts Dorst, Negron, and Caudrado, thirty miles west of Mount Arayat. OPERATION THUNDER-LIGHTNING lasted for 211 days and involved more than 5,000 troops. When it ended in mid-September, government forces had captured eighty-eight Huks, killed forty-three, accepted the surrender of fifty-four others, and destroyed ninety-nine production bases, burned more than five hundred enemy huts, and captured ninety-nine weapons. By comparison, government casualties were extremely light -- five killed, four wounded, and one L-5 destroyed. But the high point of OPERATION THUNDER-LIGHTNING came on 17 May when Luis Taruc surrendered to a young presidential assistant, Ninoy Aquino.[54] The following day, Taruc's Chief of Staff surrendered

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[53]Report, JUSMAG to CINCPAC, "Monthly Report of Activities for January 1954," 10 Feb 54, MMRD, RG 330, box 46, NARA, Washington, D.C.; McCarren, Personal Leadership, p. 36; and Military Assistance Institute, Country Study, p. 5.

[54]In August, Taruc was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment and given a 20,000 peso fine -- considered a very light sentence. Reports, JUSMAG to CINCPAC, "Monthly Summary of

to government troops in Candaba Swamp and started a mass surrender of Huk leaders and guerrillas throughout central Luzon.

Concurrent with Taruc's surrender, Second Military Area forces conducted a six-week long operation centered on Mount Banahaw. There, two battalions pushed through the Sierra Madre mountains northeast toward the Pacific Ocean. By the time they reached the coast, they killed twenty-nine guerrillas, wounded eight, and captured another twenty-three. All toll, government troops killed nearly 6,000 Huks, wounded an estimated 1,600, captured over 4,000, and accepted the surrender of yet another 16,000 as the campaign drew to a close in late 1954. During this same period, the AFP suffered 642 killed and another 710 wounded.[55]

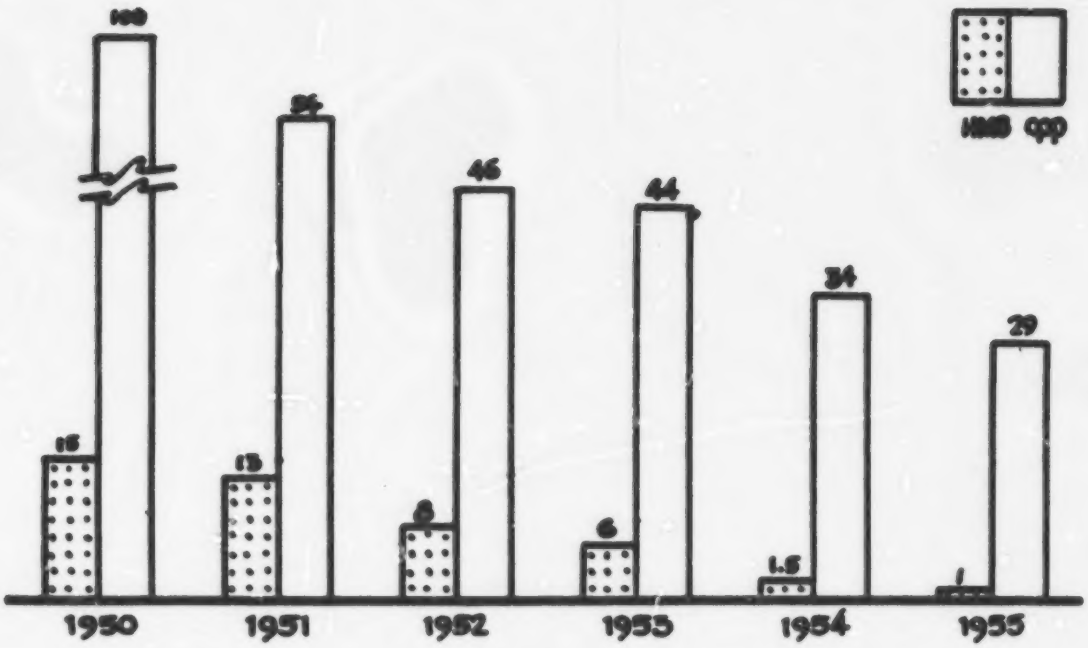
Throughout 1955 the number of guerrillas remaining at large continued to diminish until by year's end less than 1,000 remained. Occasional sightings and some contact was made with these hold-outs, but they all but disappeared as a threat to either the region or the government. Their organization was destroyed and the former Huks were nothing more than roving bands of thieves and bandits trying to get enough food and support to simply survive. The number of Huk sympathizers in the region suffered a similar fate. Of the 250,000 Huk supporters in central Luzon in 1949, less than 30,000 could be found by December 1955.[56]

Activities for August 1954," 10 Sep 54; and "Report for September 1954," 9 Oct 54, both in MMRD, RG 330, box 46, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[55]Reports, JUSMAG to CINCPAC, "Monthly Summary for June 1954,: 10 Jul 54; and "Monthly Report for February 1955."

[56]Ibid.; and Swarbrick, The Evolution of Communist Insurgency, p. 38.

HMB/CPP Strength
1950-1955
(in thousands)



Source: Donald MacGrain, Anti-Dissident Operations in the Philippines, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, [1967]), p. 35.

Chart 8

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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

When one looks back on the insurrection, one sees that Ramon Magsaysay defeated the guerrillas through a campaign that combined American aid and assistance, domestic social reforms, and a revitalization of both the Philippine military and central government. Before mid-1950, Manila governments had neither the resources nor the inclination to attack the insurgents with such a broad socio-military program. Did the movement's rapid growth after World War II indicate that the people supported their form of change or does it indicate that Huk leaders merely took advantage of ineffectual governments in Manila? Perhaps a little of both was true. At various times the Huks were indeed effective and, at their peak of influence in 1950, kept the Philippine president in self-imposed seclusion within Malacanang. Finally, did Magsaysay's ultimate success indicate that American post-war policy was handled correctly? Indeed not, for although U.S. policy after mid-1950 allowed Magsaysay to win the battle, U.S. policy between 1945 and 1950 was certainly deficient. If instead, American policy had been less complacent and more sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the Filipino people, the Hukbalahap movement would simply have dried up and blown away after the war.

The entire insurgency suffered from a variety of ailments at different times during the course of the insurrection. Each of the key players in the rebellion; the Philippine government, the United States, and the guerrillas achieved victories between 1946 and 1955. It was this timing of neglect, reaction, victory, and defeat that eventually doomed the insurrection to failure. U.S. neglect of social problems on Luzon after the war combined with a series of uncaring governments in Manila to provide the Huks with

fertile ground for their communist based insurgency. Only when the Philippine government was at the brink of collapse did U.S. policy makers tackle the real problems facing this allied nation and provide the necessary assistance that allowed Magsaysay to carry out his strategy to defeat the guerrillas.

The Huk Guerrillas

By taking advantage of World War II to consolidate their organization, the Huks were able to adapt quickly to post-war conditions in the Philippines. The people of central Luzon were disillusioned with the post-war government and felt that no one but the Huks cared about their problems. That the guerrillas were communist inspired made little difference to a peasant farmer who lacked education, medical care, clean water, and was deeply in debt to uncaring landlords. The Huks understood this disaffection and made it the cornerstone for their movement.

At war's end, the Huks had a goal -- the overthrow of the Philippine government and the establishment of a communist state -- and they possessed the internal organization to mount an effective campaign to achieve it. Prior to 1951, they had sufficient logistic support to maintain their forces and to strike out against government police and military forces who at best, were reluctant to venture far afield to chase them. And, at least during the first stage of the insurrection, the Huks had the support of the local population -- the key that made all of their actions possible. This was a population that had suffered at the hands of the Japanese and was then suffering at the hands of their own government and its poorly disciplined troops. In both instances, the Huks seemed the only force visibly fighting against those who were oppressing the peasants.

However, by mid-1950 the Hukbalahap movement began to suffer from symptoms that had afflicted it during World War II -- over confidence and lapses of security. The October Manila raid hurt them seriously and disrupted their joint political-military strategy. Coupled with public outrage over the murder of Senora Quezon and other atrocities against civilians, the Huks' mass support base developed cracks. Later, when the government managed to mount a few successful operations, the cracks expanded and eventually led to the movement's collapse. Taruc knew that he depended on popular support to survive, but as government pressure built against him, he began demanding too much from the same peasants he had once vowed to protect from just that type of abuse. Once his mass support base began to crumble, the end was in sight. His chief opponent, Ramon Magsaysay, realized the importance of popular support from his own days as a guerrilla leader, and won it for the government.

Ramon Magsaysay

It required two major changes to the post-war status quo for the Philippine government to defeat the Huks. First, the United States had to recognize the severity of the insurgency and provide appropriate amounts of advice and military and economic assistance to help counter it. Luckily, this American advice was sound and well received by an enlightened Filipino leader, Magsaysay. Second, a government victory required an administration in Manila that was more concerned with improving the quality of life for its citizens than with self-enrichment. Ramon Magsaysay provided the latter when he accepted the position of Secretary of National Defense and later won the office of President.

What attributes made this former Zambales resident and son of a village school teacher so successful in winning his fellow

Filipinos' loyalty? Certainly his well-known honesty helped him achieve his position in the Congress. But it was his deep and sincere concern for his fellows that brought him to national attention and paved the way for his becoming the Secretary of National Defense. He was a man dedicated to duty and blessed with a personality that blended persistance and charisma with an ability to listen to those around him. Perhaps his greatest attribute, an atribute certainly reinforced by his own war-time experience as a guerrilla leader, was his ability to see the Huk guerrilla movement as symptomatic of greater diseases that were threatening his country -- poverty, rising social expectations, and an uncaring and corrupt central government.

These were the targets that Magsaysay set his sights on. He combined military operations with civic-action projects to form his grand strategy, a strategy that, if successful, would improve Philippine living conditions and remove the base of guerrilla strength -- popular support. He demanded that each soldier, regardless of rank, be dedicated first to the people, then, to killing the guerrillas. He changed the basic tactics used by the Philippine military and fostered unconventional operations, while concurrently developing a more professional and competent armed forces. The military and the government had first to win the respect of the people before their anti-Huk campaign could ever produce tangible results. Military abuses ceased and soldiers or policemen implicated in abusing civilians were dealt with swiftly and harshly. Without the people's support, whatever gains the military made would vanish as soon as the last trooper returned to his garrison. Without the people's support, Huks would be unable to move freely or sustain themselves in the field.

With American assistance and the fortune of having Edward Lansdale's advice, counsel, and friendship, Magsaysay's strategy proved a resounding success. EDCOR provided land for reformed guerrillas. Other tracts of government land were sold to the

people, schools were established, transportation and communication networks were repaired and improved and, for the first time, the armed forces worked side by side with the people to secure their mutual future.

As an epilogue to his remarkable life, Ramon Magsaysay was honored with a commemorative stamp issued by the United States shortly after his death in 1957. At the ceremony accompanying the stamp's issue, President Eisenhower eulogized this progressive leader and his contribution to Philippine democracy.

> If we are ready to do our full part in combating communism, we must as a unit stand not only ready, as Magsaysay did, to bare his chest to the bayonet, if it comes to that, but to work day by day for the betterment -- the spiritual, moral, intellectual, and material betterment -- of the people who live under freedom, so that not only may they venerate it but they can support it. This Magsaysay did, and in this I believe is his true greatness, the kind of greatness that will be remembered long after any words we can speak here will have been forgotten.[1]

United States Support

Without American economic and military assistance to the Philippine governments after 1950, the Huks might well have succeeded in their rebellion. But, before we applaud the U.S. effort too quickly, perhaps we should consider that U.S. neglect and short sighted helped put the government in jeopardy. Before 1950, U.S. policy makers concentrated their attentions on Europe, were tired of war in the Pacific, and seemed blind to the many problems that tore at the islands. The land-tenure question had been present since the days the nation became an American

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[1]US Department of State Bulletin, Remarks of President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles on US Commemorative Stamp Honoring Magsaysay, September 16, 1957, p. 472.

protectorate and very little had been done to ease its burden on the Filipino farmer. Although land-tenure was a major factor in the years preceding WWII, after the war, U.S. policy ignored it and was intent on divestiture of responsibility for the islands.

Economic aid was made available to the government after the war but the programs were poorly managed and did little other than increase the size of many Filipino elite's bank balances. Other programs, such as the various economic trade acts and the issue of collaboration served only to widen the gap between the people and their government. American foreign policy makers simply did not understand Filipino concerns and aspirations and therefore chose to ignore them. Many incisive and worthwhile reports on conditions in the Philippines (such as that delivered by the Bell Mission) went unheeded until the government in Manila nearly fell in 1950.

Luckily, once the American government realized how close to collapse the Quirino administration was in 1950, Washington reacted. JUSMAG reports, long ignored or given only summary attention, suddenly gained new respect and concern. The JUSMAG was expanded, aid began to flow in, and opinions expressed by some of the JUSMAG's exceptional advisors began to receive attention. Thanks in great measure to the Korean War that was attracting the lion's share of attention in Washington, advisors found themselves with great latitude and were able to develop comprehensive assistance programs that worked hand-in-hand with Magsaysay's objectives for integrating the armed forces with social reforms.

Although the Philippines received large amounts of military aid and equipment from the United States during this period, most of it came from surplus WWII stocks. The equipment was simple to use and maintain, and allowed the AFP to adapt quickly to it and keep it operational. One should remember that the vast

preponderance of newer equipment was committed elsewhere, Europe and Korea. Another result of the Korean War was that no U.S. troops were readily available for deployment to the Philippines and, with very few exceptions, American advisors were prohibited from taking the field with their Filipino counterparts until the latter stages of the insurgency. This was perhaps one of our greatest contributions to the Philippines during this period. Without foreign troops to assist them, the Philippine military was forced to develop on its own, under its own leaders, and fight to protect its own land and people. Once the Army became convinced that they were fighting to protect their countrymen, and not as an occupation force trying to subdue an unruly foreign population, they began to receive the people's support. As already described, the alliance of the military with the villagers, and in turn the villagers reliance on the government, spelled the end for the Huk movement.

JUSMAG advisors did all they could to foster a sense of Filipino self-reliance. Whenever possible, they assumed back-row seats for themselves so that government officials could look good and receive the credit for successful operations. Even when programs succeeded as direct results of American efforts, the advisors played down their own role and let a Filipino become the moment's hero. This built pride and self-esteem in both the officials involved and, more importantly, in the Filipino people. They saw themselves succeeding where others had failed and they tried to continue the pattern. When advice was given, it was given directly to the Filipino leader who needed it, as low in the organization as possible, and given by an advisor who the recipient knew and trusted. And how did they develop this trust? General Lansdale put it quite simply -- treat them as equals, treat them fairly and honestly, never lie to them, and prove your intentions by displaying courage and willingly accepting the same hardships and inconveniences that they do. In essence then, you must demonstrate that you consider them as good as yourself and

that you trust and respect them as much as you want them to trust and respect you.[2]

By following these guides the United States helped the Philippine government solve its internal insurgency. The American government provided most of the material with which the Philippine military fought, provided the money that paid them, and provided advice when it was needed. But, it was Filipinos who fought the battles and defeated the guerrillas under the leadership of an unusual man endowed with the insight to see the larger problem that fostered the resistance, and a leader who aggressively sought to remove the causes for internal unrest in the future.

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[2]Interview with Edward G. Lansdale.

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